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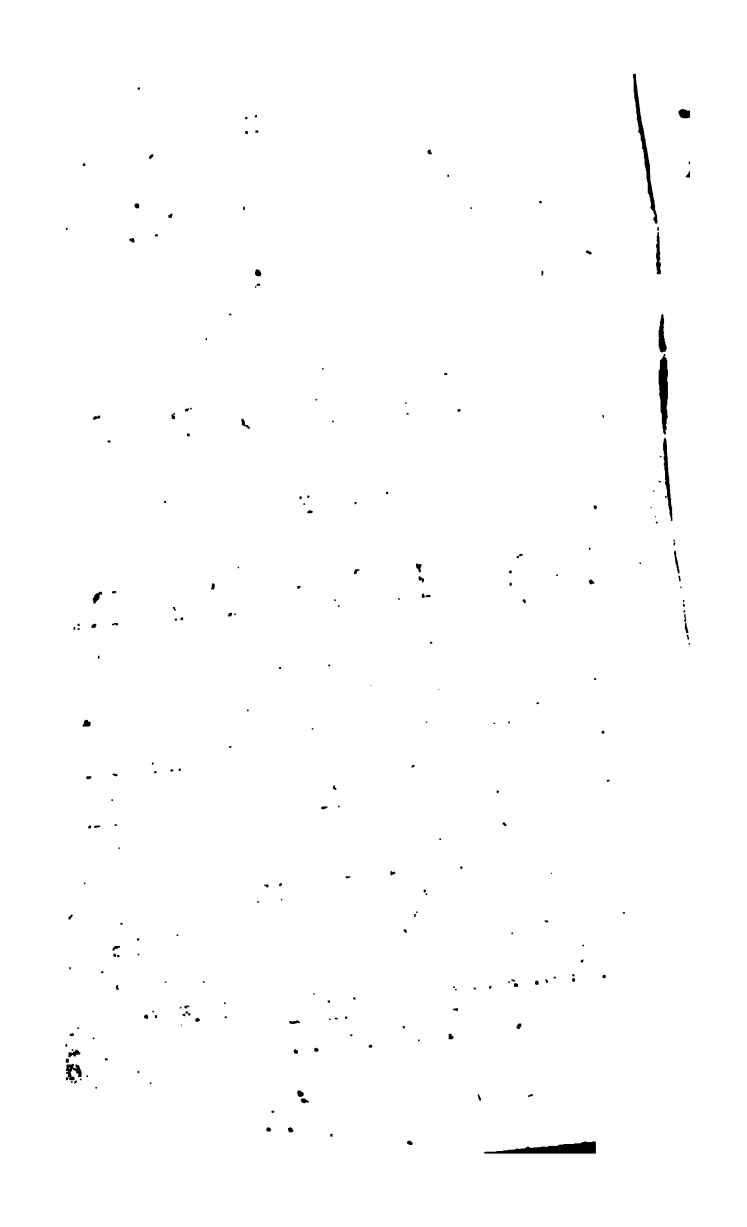
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T H E

INDISCREET CONNECTION.

L E T T E R XXXII.

Miss LESTER to Miss CAMDEN.

OH, my Cecilia! how exceedingly distressed am I! Beaumont is married. Every thing is now over with your unhappy friend.

I have already told you that I sent no answer to his note, and that I repented. Repent I did, indeed, when I considered that he might be so much displeased with my neglect as never to

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solicit another meeting. My reflections pained me to the quick : I was overwhelmed with grief and remorse. I would have given the world to have had it in my power to call back the messenger, and to bid him tell Beaumont, that I should be at the place appointed. It was impossible for me to recall *him* ; I could only hope to repair the mistake I had committed by going myself to *that place*.

Accordingly, I put on my hat, hurried out of the house, and got to the *Park*, unobserved and unmolested.

While I was flying through the stable-yard, I met Mr. Grindall.

I started, coloured, and looked so confused that he presently suspected something.

He

He asked me immediately where I was going? holding my hand so fast, at the same time, that I could not disengage myself from him, agreeably to my wish and intention.

Mortified at being detained, I looked, I am sure, as I felt, both vexed and embarrassed. I hesitated, considering what I should say.

During my hesitation, he answered for me; "Come, Miss Lester, said he, I guess your design. You expect—you hope at least, to meet Mr. Beaumont. Pray give yourself time to reflect on the indiscretion, the indelicacy, the madness of continuing a correspondence with a man whose family hold you in the greatest contempt. Be advised, my dear Kitty, and do not risk

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your honour, peace and reputation, by following a man who regards you only as a person who may contribute to his pleasure. Can you be mean enough, Miss Lester, to bear the thoughts of appearing in such a despicable light ? especially when you may, if you please, confer real happiness on Mr. Lawson, who will both love and respect you for a decision in his favour—On the other hand, by falling in with Beaumont's schemes, you will not only be guilty of the greatest folly, you will also deserve to be criminally condemned, as he may be now looked upon the husband of another woman."

I felt myself both ashamed, and unhappy at this address ; but—shall I confess the truth ?—I was still more
pained

pained by the hint about Beaumont's marriage.

I turned pale—I was suddenly chilled—I was ready to faint—I could not have answered him if millions had been offered me.

He took advantage of my silence, of my inability to contend with him, and led me back from the place to which I was going ; setting out my attachment to Beaumont, all the way we went, in such a criminal light, that I became convinced I ought to have nothing farther to say to him. My tears, however, I could not restrain ; they rushed from my eyes when I had considered, that every step I walked carried me to a greater distance from Beaumont. I was ready to die with grief.

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Mr. Grindall, seeing how much I was affected, good naturedly endeavoured to calm my mind ; and, that I might not be stared at in the condition I was in, called a coach.

During our short ride, he repeated his admonitions, which I felt were just, though I could not attend to them so seriously as I should have done. The thoughts of relinquishing Beaumont for ever, of banishing all remembrance of of him, if possible, almost drove me to distraction. Besides, I could not help flattering myself, that if I had met him, according to his appointment, I might have prevented his marriage with Lady Ann.

I came home in a state of mind not easily to be described.

Mr.

Mr. Grindall and my mother were with me, by turns, all that day, and the next, or I had certainly got out again once more in search of him.

On the third day, while I was sitting, at my mother's desire, at work in her room, Mr. Grindall appeared.

"Now, my dear Kitty, said he, to convince you how idle all your expectations were with regard to Mr. Beaumont, he was married this morning to Lady Ann."

This intelligence was too much for me; it was, indeed, what I had long expected, but I could not support the shock it gave me: I fell back, senseless, in my chair.

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I recovered, at last, only to know that I was completely wretched: yet, though I cannot help feeling myself so, I am thoroughly satisfied that I have, by my own folly, brought the wretchedness, of which I complain, upon myself. I have now only to wish, that I had never seen Mr. Beaumont, or that he had never distinguished *me*: but if *he* had not distinguished *me*, I must have taken particular notice of *him*.—Would I had never known *him*, or his haughty sister! Lady Charlotte's neglect, added to her brother's inconstancy, prey upon my mind, and exclude repose from it: I must learn to forget them both, if I would be in the smallest degree happy. If I had seen Beaumont before the fatal ceremony was performed, my sighs, my tears, might possibly have turned him from his
pur-

purpose.—But why should I think so? He could never have been contented to marry me—the difference between us is too great. I have lost all relish for every thing in the world, since I must no longer think of the man who was all the world to *me*. To what end, however, do I tire you with my complaints? Yet some relief we gain when we disclose our inmost thoughts to a sincere friend. Are *you* not such a friend, my Cecilia? May I still reckon upon *you*, after having been so cruelly mistaken in Lady Charlotte? May I not be permitted to entertain *some* doubts? Pardoned, at least, for entertaining them? But away suspicion! I will not injure my Cecilia, by distrusting her. *I* only have been to blame—I have *deceived myself*.

Mr. Grindall always told me, that a sincere friendship can never subsist between two persons in situations extremely different, with regard to rank, fortune, &c. &c. I never, indeed, considered, when Lady Charlotte first honoured me with singular marks of her esteem, and when she preferred me to all her sex, that she was the daughter of an earl, and that I was only the child of a man in trade. As children we agreed very well; but when we grew up, and were to appear in the world, I soon found that she looked upon herself as greatly my superior, and that she thought she did me a favour, by taking any notice of me at all. Had she, indeed, so far overlooked me, as not to invite me to come and stay with her, her neglect would have been the happiest I ever met with: but we

cannot

cannot foresee events ; we must, therefore, learn to bear our unexpected disappointments with patience.

How happy are you, my dear Cecilia, who never were so susceptible of a passion which has made *me* miserable ; and who are quite indifferent about what has cost me so much anxiety ! but we cannot change our inclinations as we please—At least, I know that *I* have tried to no purpose. May *you* be ever happier than

your affectionate

C. LESTER.

B 6

LET

LETTER XXXIII.

Miss CAMDEN to Miss LESTER.

I HAVE received your letter, with an account of Mr. Beaumont's marriage, my dear Kitty, and am really concerned to find you rendered so unhappy by an event which, if considered in a proper light, can, in no shape, affect you; for with what propriety could you ever have expected to be received as the daughter of the Earl of Beaumont? People of *his* rank seldom, if at any time, approve of so unequal an alliance; unequal in birth and fortune, the only points which they regard: you have therefore only deceived yourself, and cannot blame Beaumont. He ought not, indeed, to be blamed for
obeying

obeying the advice of his father, if he has chosen him a woman capable of making him happy. I very much doubt his capacity to make any woman happy, by your account of him. A man of *his* disposition would not, I fancy, be very constant, either as a husband or a lover. Believe me, Kitty, you have no loss of him; and I think old Grindall acted in both a wise and a friendly manner to interfere, and to save you from a meeting which could not have done you any good; which might have been, which, most probably, would have been attended with very disagreeable consequences. Comfort yourself, therefore, by reflecting upon your escape, for you would, certainly, have exposed yourself by your fondness.

De

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Do not be angry with me, Kitty, for saying that you have been a great deal too fond of this man ; and now, indeed, you cannot think of him any more without appearing in a criminal light. Besides, I should have too much spirit to run after any man, or to let any man imagine that I was capable of lessening myself so exceedingly. Indeed, Kitty, you were always wrong, and though Beaumont never would have married *you*, had you conducted yourself with ever so much discretion, I believe you rather wish that you had not given him any reason to entertain a slight opinion of you. Every man must entertain a slight opinion of a woman who discovers an improper inclination for him. As you cannot, however, recall what is past, you have nothing to do but to endeavour to repair

pair it, and repair it you may, in some degree, by an entire change in your behaviour; by making a firm resolution never to see Beaumont again, and even to try to forget him if possible. When you can *forget* him, you may then, and not till then, pronounce yourself perfectly cured. Then, and not till then, I shall look upon you as a reasonable creature.

And now, to shift the subject, and divert you, I will tell you how *I* manage *my* affairs, for I have not a grain of penetration, if my friend Charles is not a little touched. I have thought so for some time; but last week all my conjectures were confirmed.

A Sir Harry Waters, whose estate is about five miles from us, applied to
my

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my father, by letter, for his consent to visit me.

My father came into the room in which Charles and I were sitting, with the proposals, and very abruptly communicated them before the young man ; saying, by way of excuse, that there were none but friends, and that he waited for *my* determination to answer Sir Harry's Letter.

I was a little surpris'd at being thus suddenly called upon to reply to an affair of so much consequence ; an affair which, according to the general opinion, requires great deliberation—I had not, indeed, the slightest intention to accept of Sir Harry's offers, but I was disconcerted and embarrassed.

In

In short, I looked like a fool: yet I was quite easy and collected, compared to the young gentleman by my side. Casting my eyes accidentally towards *him*, I saw him turn pale and red alternately—He quitted his chair, then sat down again; opened his mouth, and shut it, and was in the most violent agitation to be imagined, which agitation presently restored me to the composure I before enjoyed—not because I saw *him* uneasy, but because *I* had no reason to be so—I began therefore, to be ashamed of seeing him make so odd an appearance.

My father, who had all this time been alternately looking at us both, repeated his desire, that I would tell him what he should say to Sir Harry.

“ If

“ If some gentlemen had made such a proposal, Sir, replied I, you might have thought it required some consideration ; but with *your* leave, Sir, continued I, I will refuse the honour Sir Harry designs me, without giving him any farther trouble.”

By a side glance at my companion, I presently perceived an instantaneous change in his countenance, from suspense and perplexity, to ease and joy.

My father left us, apparently satisfied with my answer ; and my young gentleman said, on seeing me smile, “ How soon is the happiness or misery of man determined ! yet it is certainly kinder to cut off all hopes at once, than to keep the mind upon the rack : nevertheless

theless the man must be pitied who is rejected by *you*."

I returned a second smile, and a bow, to a compliment which was indeed so palpable that he could not have missed it.

I told him, that I believed it was not in my power to confer either happiness or misery on Sir Harry Waters, and that I was, therefore, quite easy about him.

"You would not be easy then, if you had refused a man who would feel himself distressed by your refusal?"

"If I was sure that my refusal would make him very wretched, answered I, I should be sorry. But I have no great
faith

faith in a man's being so much affected by such a refusal : I think I shall never be vastly miserable about it."

He looked very serious—"There are very small hopes then, said he, for *me* : I can never expect to touch your heart."

I laughed out at this : I was, perhaps, merry at seeing him so solemn, Kitty—Don't ask me why I laughed, child ; I am not in love with him as you are with Beaumont—However, to confess the truth, I should not be sorry to see *him* in love with *me* ; and my seeming to treat him with indifference is the most likely way to fix him. Some men are fond of difficulties, and Charles, I fancy, will meet with many, if he happens to be really *charmed* with me.

Not

Not that I love flirting neither ; but I think that a woman who is soon won can afford little pleasure in the pursuit. Besides, we are very apt to despise what comes cheap to us, and is gained without much trouble.

But where am I running with my reflections?—I left off laughing, and I begin again—My mirth disconcerted my gentleman a good deal ; I therefore strove to compose myself, as well as I could ; by so doing, I restored him, in some measure, to his former tranquillity. Yet there remains a kind of pensiveness in his face, accompanied by anxiety, which makes him minutely watch my every look and action. I hate to be watched ; and yet if the man is really in love, how can he help it ? He is a worthy creature, I verily believe ;

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believe ; but love certainly converts some people into characters extremely foolish. I will keep my heart then untouched by that passion, as carefully as I would preserve my person from the bite of a mad dog. Follow my example, Kitty, and think no more of a man who is not worthy of your slightest attention.

I am, at all times,

your's,

most sincerely,

C. CAMDEN.

P. S. I recommend Lawson to you most earnestly, my dear : there is nothing like driving one lover out of one's head by the admission of another. Besides, he seems quite the sort of man for you ; constant, tender, and submissive—What other qualifications would a reasonable woman desire in a husband ?

band? Be advised, therefore, and accept of him at once, lest he, tired with your repeated refusals, should leave you, in order to pay his addresses to another more willing to listen to them.

LETTER XXXIV.

MISS LESTER to MISS CAMDEN.

I WAS greatly disappointed by your last, my dear Cecilia; I fully expected a letter of a very different sort. I hoped to find the affectionate, condoling friend in every line; but you only chide me, or laugh at me. How happy are you, my dear, to enjoy a mind sufficiently at ease to let you divert yourself with your admirers, and

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and make yourself merry with their sorrows ! Of what different dispositions are we ! I cannot even see Lawson, (persecuted as I am upon *his* account) look melancholy and distressed, without feeling for him, though I cannot, by any means whatever, love him. My mother, indeed, and Mr. Grindall, are perpetually joining with *him* to tease me into a compliance with their wishes. I am almost distracted by their urgent importunities. My mother is, I think, more eager for my marriage with Lawson than any body : she not only presses me to marry him, on purpose to let Beaumont see that I do not care for him, but tells me also, that as she has spent so much more on my education than Mr. Grindall had allowed for it, I must re-imburse her out of my fortune. That re-imbursement,

ment, you know, will make my little fortune less: I shall, indeed, have a very scanty pittance remaining, as my mother calls it; and with no opportunity of making a better bargain than what Lawson proposes.—How like a woman of the world does my mother talk upon this occasion! she thinks of nothing but how we are to eat, dress, and *appear*; she tells me, that as I have suffered one man to give me the slip, I shall, probably, never meet with another, if I do not secure Lawson—She thinks exactly with *you*, that he is the right sort of man for a husband: but he will never appear to *me* in the light Beaumont does, who had gained my mother quite over to his party. Mr. Grindall is of the same opinion with you and my mother, yet he wishes not to force me, nor does he ever at-

tempt to persuade me into a marriage, which will not, he fears, content me, as I have *unhappily* (that is the word he used) been accustomed to different connections. Unhappily, indeed! as I fear, with him, that I shall never like any man but Beaumont, though I am very sensible I ought to think no more about him.

This Grindall is, I believe, a well-meaning old man, but there is no bearing my mother—She makes my life absolutely miserable, by continually, with a most provoking restlessness, endeavouring to send me out of her way; and by continually upbraiding me, when I am with her, with my want of art to keep Beaumont to myself. I wish, if she had known what would have secured him, she had acquainted

ed

ed me with it. Situated as I am at present, I am afraid that I shall never know peace again.

Adieu.

C. LESTER.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Mrs. LESTER to Mrs. SAXBY.

SINCE I wrote last, I have been so perplexed—You see by the papers, no doubt, that Mr. Beaumont is married to Lady Ann Dale. This marriage has put Kitty into such a fuss, that her head is almost turned with her fretting and her fancies. I dare say, she has lost her man by her own fault: she might have made something of

C 2

him,

him, if she had played her cards well, to my knowledge. I am sure I gave her the best of advice; and I think I have lived long enough in the world to know how to behave to a man: but the girl was so wrong-headed, as to ~~be~~ fondly, foolishly, seriously in love with him. She might have pretended fondness for him, with good policy, in order to mould him to her purpose; but actually to love him—she could not have acted a more ridiculous part. She took the only way to make nothing of him; she should have staid till she had secured him, and then she might have done what she pleased with him: but she has conducted herself like a downright simpleton, and so, I suppose, I must be plagued with her at home. But that will never do: I cannot endure to have such a great girl
always

always with me. I must get rid of her some how or other.

I have not yet prevailed on her to accept of Lawson: I am sure he is a good match for her. Had he made his proposals to *me*, I should not have hesitated about them a moment. I don't deny but that the living in the city is not what one would chuse, yet it is a very good thing to get an offer at all, as men go now; for though I had once some hopes of Beaumont for a son-in-law, I never imagined that he would make any offers to Kitty: to be sure I could not expect such monstrous luck; but I thought, that if he happened to be struck with her, and if she managed matters cleverly, she might keep him off, and draw him on, till she found he could not live with-

out her. When once a woman has made herself necessary to a man, she may do what she pleases with him. Kitty is a poor, low-spirited thing; she has no idea of making the most of a man. She is pretty, to be sure; she is like me only in her person; but she has no art at all. Beauty alone will never do; though it is a very good thing to catch the men with at first; but a great deal of contrivance is required to keep them, especially such fine fellows as Beaumont. Young men of fashion who know the world, find out such girls as Kitty in a moment, and as soon know that they may do what they will with her. However, had I been in *her* place, I dare answer for it, that I could have made Beaumont believe what I pleased, if he had taken a fancy to me: but they like these young things best, because

cause they can soon make fools of them.

Well, after all, she has had a narrow escape. I wonder he did not discover her weak side, considering how much she was in love with him—It would have been a dreadful thing to have the girl ruined, you know; so we must make the best of it. If I could but get her to marry Lawson, it would do very well. Let it be how it will, I must think on some method to dispose of her somewhere, for she is so much in my way: and then she has learnt so many new fashions at the Earl of Beaumont's, that she is, really, not fit to live upon a small fortune. Now Lawson, though not rich, is in good circumstances, and she may have two maids and a footman, and that

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is very genteel in the city ; and if he should be lucky, there may be a coach in time, which is more than Kitty's fortune can demand ; for it was always small, and to be sure it has been lessened for the sake of her education. But, as I said before, what signifies money, unless people know how to enjoy it ? Now Kitty is perfectly well qualified for the very best company : there is not a woman in the city, I dare say, who can exceed her in good breeding. She understands every punctilio to a hair, and knows when to give and when to take place ; how to make parties for cards, and who is to be helped first at table. No, I have not been at all this expence for nothing ; but then her notions are rather too high ; for t'other day, I had four or five tables, just a private party of friends, I bade her

her make the tea—Would you believe it? She told me, that she could not, indeed! that Lady Beaumont and Lady Charlotte, never thought of making tea; it was always made in the drawing-room, she said, by my Lady's woman, and my Lord's gentleman brought it to the company, while half a dozen footmen attended with toasts and cakes—But you know, Kitty, said I, as I have no man, and only Jenny, who does all the work, I can't have things in that manner; and so, as I must have my tea made in the dining-room, you must make it, for I must set the company down to cards. So she *did* pour out the tea, as I insisted upon it; but such water-bewitched, such slip-slop you never tasted in your life—I saw she was above what she was about; now that is wrong: I love to see a young

person keep up her consequence ; but there is no reason, that because she knows her value, she should look higher than any body. I do think that Kitty will be a very fine lady indeed ; but I shall tell her plainly, that I cannot support her in the manner she has been used to live at my Lord's, and so she must take things as she finds them ; and if she stays with me she must be content to live as I do, or else to marry Lawson, which is, indeed, the only thing she has left to do, and which I must oblige her to do, or I shall be weary of my life, I see that plainly. Besides, the monstrous expence I shall be brought into by her living with me ; an expence which it is impossible for me to support—She shall, therefore, marry Lawson, and so, my dear Saxby, I beg you will call on me, and help

help me to persuade her. She is of a mild temper, and cannot bear much opposition ; she will yield, I dare say, rather than contend at any time ; and and when once she is well settled, I shall begin to enjoy myself, as there is nothing so disagreeable as having such a great girl always after one. In hopes of seeing you soon, I conclude myself,

ever yours,

C. LESTER.

LETTER XXXVI.

Mr. BEAUMONT to Mr. FOLEY.

HOW fits matrimony upon me, do you say ? Why, in truth, my friend, not quite so easy as I had flatter-

ed myself it would. I had fancied that if my wife should happen to be troublesome, her impertinence would not disturb me ; but my Lady has learnt the art of making those hours which I hoped might have been tolerable, not to be endured ; and entirely from her jealousy on Kitty Lester's account, whom I have not seen since I was married. The little flirt has jilted me, at the very moment when I thought myself sure of her. She was to have met me the day before my *execution-day*, and had she kept her appointment, I should have most probably secured her. By so doing I should have been, in some measure, consoled for the reproaches I receive from my termagant for *her* sake. I should have had a soft, kind girl to retire to when my wife was in her airs, and then ~~she~~ *she* would have had something
to

to quarrel with me about : but now her suspicions are altogether groundless, and I am perpetually upbraided for what I cannot do, because the girl is out of my reach. Indeed, Charles, I never thought that I, with *my* spirit, should have been so much kept under by a woman, especially by a wife too. I imagined, indeed, that my thorough contempt for matrimony would have prevented me from being affected by any thing a wife could say or do : but there is something in Lady Ann that baffles all my powers, in love or anger. I am no match for her at all. You may question my veracity, perhaps, upon this occasion, but I am serious : would to heaven I had no reason to be so ! She is certainly, a very extraordinary character : she is one of the finest figures in town, and her wit is equal

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to her beauty. She is tall, fair, and made quite in the large way. Her complexion is brilliant ; her neck and bosom can hardly be equalled. Her eyes are full, and not small ; they are blue, and can express, at times, very forcibly, the most impassioned tenderness, and the fiercest rage. Her nose, mouth, and chin are so finely shaped, and give such a majestic air to her face, that she seems born to command and conquer all hearts. With the highest idea of her own personal charms, and with the strongest partiality to her own intellectual accomplishments, she looks upon every man who thinks any other woman supportable, as a poor, mean, pitiful fellow, destitute of taste, with no life, no soul.—Not that I believe she is, at present, inclined to reduce me to the necessity of suing for a divorce;

vorce ; she will, I am persuaded, be constant to *me*, if she can possibly imagine that I am faithful to her : but firmly convinced that I keep Kitty, and that I am totally attached to *her*, she fancies she has a right, I am actually of opinion, to make reprisals, and *would* undoubtedly make them did not her inclination for me—(if she does not love me I am extremely mistaken) hinder her from committing any violent indiscretions. How long she will remain *honest* I cannot say : as all the *passion* which I can throw into my looks, words, and actions, are insufficient to assure her that I am true to her alone. After every the shortest absence from her she asks me, alarmed, a thousand questions, and quarrels with me because my answers do not happen to prove agreeable to her. This behaviour is, you must own, very provoking ; I am sometimes, indeed, stimulated

mulated to return sharp replies ; those
 replies produce still sharper ones from
 her, and we grow exceedingly clamor-
 ous, wishing each other fairly at the
 devil. Then, and only then, do I wish
 Kitty Lester in her place ; for let me pe-
 rish if I could not be very well content-
 ed with Lady Ann, though she was not
 the woman of my choice, if she would
 let me alone. There is a delicacy in
 Kitty's make, and a genteelness in her
 manners more to my taste. I will, how-
 ever, do Lady Ann the justice to con-
 fess that she is superior in person and
 in wit, if the former is to be valued for
 its size, and the latter for its satire.
 She is, in few words, too handsome for
 my peace and for her own. She ex-
 pects too much : she cannot be happy
 without engrossing admiration. Now
 with such a violent woman how is it
 possible

possible to live upon tolerable terms?
Thus you see that with the handsomest,
fondest and faithfullest wife in the
world, wretchedness is the lot of,

your affectionate friend,

E. BEAUMONT.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

Miss LESTER to Miss CAMDEN.

MY mother, and Mr. Grindall—
let me add too, my Cecilia—
have prevailed. I have promised to
give my hand to Mr. Lawson: but
were I to tell you how many times
I have repented since, I should, I fear,
considerably lessen the merit of my
compliance. They all seem to be
very

very well acquainted with my feelings, for they hurry things strangely. However, it does not signify: the sooner it is done, the sooner it will be over.

Beaumont is married, and there is nothing to wait for. I have as little joy in my bridal ornaments, as I should have were they my funeral ones: and, were I to chuse, I should sincerely give the preference to the latter, could I lie down in peace and never think again. But you, my Cecilia, who know not the sorrows of your unhappy friend, why are *you* thus inclined to trifle with a heart which loves you, and which you love too, Miss Camden, for all your affected indifference? Only reflect a few moments on the uncertainty of every thing in this world, and how
few

few people ever have it in their power to be happy ; and since it is now fortunately in yours, do not lose the lucky minute ; seize it, and make it your own for ever. Gladly—how gladly, would I be in your place, without injuring *you*, my friend ! without depriving you of your lover, whom I cannot even know—How gladly would I love Lawson, as well as you do Charles ! This is a happiness which will, I fear, be ever denied to your,

sincerely affectionate,

KITTY LESTER.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

Miss CAMDEN to Miss LESTER.

MY dear, good girl, how exceedingly am I rejoiced to hear that you have, at last, determined to act with so much discretion ; to do the very wisest thing on earth ; to marry Lawson who adores you, and to despise that Beaumont, who meanly left you, for a woman of superior rank and fortune ; or who would, indeed, never have married you, because you were deficient in those empty nothings which cannot confer any real felicity. Beaumont's fortune was large enough for you both, and that which he gains by his wife will never recompense him for her ill humour. But to have done
with

with *him*—May you be happy with the amiable Lawfon, for I am told he well deserves *that* epithet. I hope, therefore, and I doubt not, you will, in a short time, find him possess'd of all those graces which Beaumont had, and all the virtues he wants. What woman in her senses, but *you*, child, would hesitate a single moment whether she should take the man who loved *her*, or the man whom *she* loved? With the man who is indifferent about you, or who wavers between you and another, can there be any satisfaction? can there be any thing except doubts, fears, and distracting jealousies? Not a shadow of felicity can be expected. On the other hand, when a man loves *you*, how different is the scene? You are admired, you are loved from morning to night; you may have every thing you wish for in a moment;

ment ; you may, at the same time, be indifferent, negligent, capricious, in short you may do just what you please : your very failings will be so many perfections, which will render you dearer and dearer to him every hour—Your power is absolute, and is not power the first wish of every woman's heart ? You are, yourself, a proof of the truth of my assertion : It was your want of power over Beaumont to keep him to yourself which occasioned his desertion. Had he loved *you* in the degree I speak of, he would not have left you for a dutchess ; not if she had been as beautiful as an angel, and mistress of millions. Who would not then, leave off fighting after fellows, and take him who fights for *her* ? Do not offer to contradict me, Kitty, for I know I am right. The man here by my side, tells me so
every

every moment ; not indeed in those very words, which are needless, but his looks and his motions are as significant as the strongest expressions.

You would persuade me, now, I suppose, to take this man at his word, as soon as I am asked by him ? But I am too wary to behave in that manner : by such a behaviour I should, probably, lose him for ever—Oh ! Kitty, Kitty ! *you* in love ?—Yes, I believe you are ; but you are exceedingly ignorant about the matter : if you had been less so, you would have kept Beaumont from Lady Ann. However, as he is gone, never to be recalled, think no more of him ; shew him all the contempt which he deserves ; marry Lawson, and triumph over him in your turn, by enjoying all that his honest love can bestow upon you.

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you. This is my advice; and now, as to yours, child, it is good for nothing. No woman in her wits would take it. What! tell the man I love him before he has made a declaration of his passion? A pretty forward creature, you would have me surely, indeed! But I think, Kitty, I know better. A woman who would preserve her influence over the heart which she has won, must not be in too great a hurry to let her lover see that she is fond of him: he would then imagine her quite at his service; he would grow careless, and indifferent, and not trouble his head whether he pleased or displeased her. Besides, she should, for *his* advantage, keep up the spirit of the chase a little: half the pleasure is over when a man is certain that he is beloved; while he is doubtful, he always finds something to employ

ploy his mind, and to fill up his time. Suspence and anxiety are infinitely serviceable to a man, in some situations ; they keep up his spirits, and whet his genius : they are particularly necessary when he is making his addresses to a woman ; they make him exert himself to be useful and entertaining to her. And so, my dear, as I propose to make my friend Charles both agreeable and useful, I shall not be in haste to write to you with any other name than that of

CECILIA CAMDEN.

LETTER XXXIX.

Mrs. LESTER to Mrs. SAXBY

WELL! at last, Heaven be praised! the girl is married, and gone home to Mr. Lawfon's, in Crooked-Lane. I am glad I am well rid of her: I am sure she may be happy if she will. I bought very handsome cloaths for her, and then her laces were as fine as those belonging to the Countess herself. To be sure her silks are all plain; that is, I mean, she has no silver nor gold in them. Indeed, I would have had a little silver stripe, or a leaf, or some such thing; but Mr. Grindall—he is a strange formal old man—would not hear of it: he said that

that any thing so extravagant was not fit for the wife of a man of business.

“Why, what do you mean, Mr. Grindall? said I; what do you mean? Is not Mr. Lawson a merchant?”

“Well, answered he, pettishly, and is not a merchant a man of business? No such fine things ought to be worn by any people in business.”

I thought the old fellow would have made me mad. “Why, surely, Mr. Grindall, said I, my daughter does not do any business, therefore she may wear what she pleases.”

“No, Madam, replied he, she may not: she ought to suit herself to her husband’s circumstances.”

“G—d defend me! cried I, quite weary with being everlastingly contradicted; have you not told me yourself, a hundred times, Mr. Grindall, that Mr. Lawson was in affluent circumstances? My daughter never should have married him if he was not. We would have had nothing to do with him, if he had not been worth a great deal of money.”

“If he was worth a million, Madam, answered he, and still followed business, his wife should dress suitably to her situation; like a creditable merchant’s wife, and not like a woman of quality.”

“Don’t tell me, Sir, said I, monstrously provoked at his nonsense, a woman who has always money at her
com-

command, may dress how she pleases. A long purse is the thing, Mr, Grindall ; let people go as they can afford to go, I say—I have seen many ragged countesses with gold and silver.”

“ They were wrong then, and so were their husbands to suffer them to appear with so much impropriety. People of rank, indeed, have particular privileges ; they may dress how they will ; every body knows who they are ; their quality is sufficient to authorize any singularity in their appearance : but men in trade, who follow any lucrative profession, or who are getting money either with their heads or their hands, must not put themselves upon a footing with the nobility and gentry.”

“ Pshaw ! cried I, how you talk. What signifies what people are, if they have but money ; that will command every thing, I warrant you ; and if I rid in a dust cart, and could afford to dress like a dutchess, I would, if I liked it.”

“ You might, Madam, but you would make yourself exceedingly ridiculous by so doing ; you would only be laughed at wherever you went, for spending your money like a fool. Would you not act more prudently to keep your money in your pocket, and dress in such a manner as to secure general respect ?”

“ Nay now, Mr. Grindall, I am sure you are very much out, said I ; for

the finest cloaths will always command the greatest respect."

"No, indeed, replied he, they will not, when they are worn by those who have no pretensions to them, they then excite nothing but contempt. It is propriety in dress, conversation, and behaviour, which can, alone, render people truly respectable: whenever they appear, or act, out of character, they become despicable. What are honours, what are titles, but to dignify, and to distinguish those who have merited them by their own actions, or who descend from illustrious ancestors? Every upstart who having by accident, or perhaps industry, got a little money, pretends to vie with people of family and fortune, exposes himself to ridicule, and cannot be too smartly satirized

sized. There are but too many of these absurd folks in the world; Mr. Lawton, I hope, will never increase the number."

In this manner did the old fellow run on, till he was quite out of breath and I quite out of patience; but nothing I could say had the least effect upon him: he would not suffer the girl to have ever so little a bit of silver in her cloaths, even though Mr. Lawton had given her a set of pearls—Grindall scolded him well for it, but he won't mind that: he is a good-natured, pretty young fellow, and vastly fond of Kitty, who has been fool enough to cry her eyes out about Beaumont.

"Ridiculous! said I to her; pray let us have none of your whining after fellows;

fellows; you can blame nobody but yourself; had you been artful enough to have kept Beaumont when you had got him, he would have been your's at this time—but that is all over. Mr. Lawfon is as young, and as handsome, and as good-humoured as Mr. Beaumont; you have only missed being a countess, child, that's all."

So I talk to her, but she only cries, and takes on; though she will be, to be sure, reconciled in time. One young fellow is as well as another, for aught I see, and so she will find it when she is a little older and wiser: but these girls are perverse creatures, there is no persuading them to listen to reason, any more than old Grindall—In short, very old and very young people are always very absurd, and head-strong:

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people only in the middle state of life,
are capable of acting with any discretion.

I shall be vastly glad to see you, my
dear Saxby, when you come to town,
and am,

your sincere friend,
and humble servant.

C. LESTER.

L E T T E R X L.

Mrs. LAWSON to Miss CAMDEN.

I THANK you, my dear Cecilia,
for your kind congratulations; I
take them, as you meant them, as the
overflowings of your friendly heart.
You rejoice, because you suppose me
possess

possest of every thing to make me happy : but how different are appearances from realities ! I am wretched because I am too fondly beloved—In the midst of affluence, I feel the greatest of all wants upon earth, the want of contentment.

Oh Cecy, Cecy ! could I but recall the hours we passed in harmless infancy together, at Mrs. D—'s ! Unacquainted with evils, we then followed, without repugnance, the precepts of those whom we believed both wiser and better than ourselves. Yet we were cruelly mistaken, my dear—That our instructors were our superiors in knowledge, is indisputable, but whether knowledge is really an advantage, I have many doubts : I am sure that *my* knowledge has ever been attended with unhappiness. Had I never been taken

D 6

from

from school; had I never seen the world or Beaumont—

I am doomed to languish out the remainder of my life in unavailing sorrow. Yet at this very moment, in spite of my complaints, I am convinced that I have no reason to complain. I feel that my behaviour is ungrateful. I have tried—nobody can tell how sincerely I have tried—to make a change in my sentiments, but all to no purpose. However, I hope that Mr. Lawton does not think me the wretch I am. As for him, I would not willingly wound his heart, knowing how much it doats on me; yet I cannot cheer it with the smiles of tender gratitude while my own has no share in its feelings. To tell you that I loath the person who is every hour studying to make me blest, would be to declare myself

myself ungrateful and cruel; but I cannot, without uttering a falsehood, tell you that I love him, that I ever *shall* love him. Let me, however, do him all the justice in my power; let me tell you that he is amiable in his person, and refined in his manners; and that he has a noble generosity of mind which would adorn a title— (What had I ever to do with people above me!) Let me tell you, that he spends his whole time in striving to please, to amuse me, in considering what will be most likely to promote my felicity. My discontent is but too visible, through all my endeavours to conceal it; yet he will not see it: he kindly and purposely overlooks what must make me appear a most unworthy object in his eyes. I really am a monster in my own. When I add to all
this,

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this, that he suppresses even his fondness, lest it should be impertinent or disgusting to me, will you not confess with me, that few men are equal to him? Will you not own that Lawson is a perfect character, and that Beaumont is a compound of cruel inconsistencies? And yet my infatuated heart can never acknowledge any other man for its lord.

And now, my dear Miss Camden, after having so frankly confessed myself to be so despicable a wretch, can you any longer look upon me as deserving of your friendship and affection? Pity me, however, my dear, good girl, and continue to permit me to unbosem myself freely to you—You cannot, unless you were in my situation, conceive how much I am eased by pouring out my sorrows.

sorrows thus to a sincere friend, by venting my griefs thus to the only person to whom I dare mention them. Glad should I be, my dear Cecilia, if you would condescend to make me a visit of a week or two : but how can I solicit you, who breath the purest air, to come and shut yourself up in a narrow, close lane in the city, full of the most noxious smells ? When I think of the place in which I live, and on the variety of trades-people round us, every one of them contributing to poison the neighbourhood, I am actually surprized that one can exist at all. Most happy should I be if the unwholsome air I breathe, would put a speedy termination to my distress : but Mr. Lawson takes so much care of me, that I fear I shall linger out a long while—Yet why do I thus complain ? why do I quarrel with
what

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what would make thousands supremely blest? I have a roomy house, handsomely furnished; I have good cloaths, plenty of money, and a most agreeable affectionate husband; and yet, as every thing about me is totally different from the ideas which I had formed of felicity, I find it very hard indeed to bear my situation.

Mr. Grindall, who is, I believe, a very good man, and means well, seems to be pleased with having settled me so advantageously, and applauds himself for his work. He called to see me the other day, and with a smile of self-satisfaction, said, looking round him, "I am glad, my dear child, to see you settled in so comfortable a manner."

What

What a mistake in the words ? *He* said *comfortably*, I would have had it *elegantly*. How differently should I have been situated with Mr. Beaumont ! How different is *Crooked-Lane* from *Berkley-Square* ! What a crowd of conveniences are here, but what a barbarous want of taste ! What company are my city neighbours ! so stiff, and so proud, and so over-drest ! Their whole conversation is about things to which I am an utter stranger ; things with which, indeed, I never wish to be acquainted, so unentertaining, so very stupid are they in *my* opinion. Could I look upon Mr. Lawson in the light he deserves, with *him* alone I might be happy : but Beaumont has for ever excluded all other men from my regard. With *him*, however, in splendid apartments, surrounded with gay and elegant companions,

companions, I might have been neglected, and treated with cold contempt, with heart-wounding indifference—I might have been left by him for a new mistress ; left by *him*, and despised by all his family—I am, therefore, fully satisfied that I ought to be contented with my lot, nay thankful for my good fortune : but we cannot new-make ourselves. Had I always lived in this part of the town, and conversed with people of this kind, they would not appear so disgusting to me : but the difference between the east and the west end of the town is too great not to make a deep impresson upon me. Why was I ever acquainted with the manners of the latter ? My father was a citizen, and in trade ; why was I not always educated in a way suitable to the obscurity of my birth, and to the poorness

of my expectations ? My mother's pride has, I fear, ruined me for ever ! The indifference which she has discovered about my peace, and her eagerness to get me married to any body, have not a little contributed to increase my uneasiness.

Write to me, my dear Cecilia, and say something to me to make me appear at least reconciled to my fate—I never shall, I am afraid, be able to subscribe myself your *happy*, though I shall ever remain

your sincerely affectionate friend,

C. LAWSON.

LET-

L E T T E R XLI.

Miss CAMDEN to Mrs. LAWSON.

YOU bid me write to you, my dear Kitty : but what can I say to such a poor wayward creature, who is insensible of her own happiness ; who, according to her own account, can never be happy ? You complain of a great want of taste among the people with whom you now associate ; but surely there is a considerable want of taste in yourself also, if you cannot relish the station of life in which you are placed—Did you think like the neighbours whom you despise, you would be as happy as they are—Instead of being objects of contempt, they are rather objects of envy. How infinitely more
satisfied

fatisfied with your lot would you be if you thought like *them* !

Talk to me no more about the barbarous want of taste in a house which is, you allow, roomy and convenient. What would you desire more than plenty and ease ? Leave *taste* to those who are weak enough to affect to despise the solid satisfactions of life, and learn to enjoy those with which you are blessed, with gratitude.

Indeed, Kitty, with such a man as you describe Mr. Lawson, it is almost impossible for a woman, unless she is strongly prepossessed in favour of a *Beau-mont*, to be unhappy. Pardon me, my dear, for saying that you, by declaring yourself to be so unhappy, discover a very depraved mind. Is there no way to
cure

cure you of this unfortunate attachment to a man who so little deserves it? who ought never to be thought of, indeed, by you! Is there no way to make you see him in his true colours; to see him as he really is; to make you detest him? Fye, my dear Mrs. Lawson! it is not only your duty, it is your interest, which calls upon you to exert a little firmness upon so important an occasion. Exert yourself, or you will be undone! I cannot imagine how it is possible for a woman, with a virtuous mind, to be violently attached to a man with principles diametrically opposite to *hers*. I think I am as fond of Charles—though he does not know my fondness for him—as any woman ought to be; and yet were I to detect him in any vicious, or ridiculous proceedings, I should immediately throw him from
me

me for ever ; I should not be able to endure him, after I had found him unworthy of my love. Exert yourself, therefore, I say again ; place the faults of one man, and the virtues of the other, in opposition to each other, before your eyes, and you must certainly, in time, not only acknowledge the superior merit of your husband, but esteem him, and love him for it. Besides, you at present see every thing in a very false light : dazzled by the splendor of Lord Beaumont's style of life, and disgusted by your sudden removal from the pleasurable to the busy part of the town, you do not give yourself time to consider, that the parade of high life is as empty as it is tiresome, and that the life *you* lead is far better calculated to make you happy. Noisy and showy amusements, continually pursued, soon produce

duce satiety ; they can, indeed, please those only who have very trifling propensities. Convenience and ease, with a mind properly disposed to enjoy them, are the only lasting blessings in life : these blessings you despise, because they are within your reach, and sigh for pleasures which you cannot arrive at ; which would soon be slighted, were they as much within your power as you wish them to be—How many women, in your condition, would think, would feel themselves the happiest of their sex ? Make use of your reason, therefore, my dear Kitty ; a proper exercise of *that*, and *time*, will, I dare believe, restore you to your wonted tranquillity. Consider, also, how much more mortified you would have been, had Beaumont married you : severely mortified, you surely would have been

to be treated with the utmost contempt by *his* family, and to behold him treated in the *same* manner on *your* account. Could all the pomp in the world make you ~~wonder~~ *amends* for having seduced a young man from his duty, from his family, to render him contemptible in their eyes, and in his own? Reflect upon this, my dear girl, and rejoice that you have escaped such humiliating sensations. You have reason to be happy; I hope, therefore, that you will soon tell me you are so.

I am, as usual,

ever yours,

C. CAMDEN.

LETTER XLII.

Mrs. LAWSON to Miss CAMDEN.

Richmond.

YOUR letter, my dear Cecilia, though some parts of it were very severe, has had the desired effect upon me; it has made me sensible of the absurdity of my wishes, and it has excited me to endeavour to make use of my reason.

Mr. Lawson, who is all consideration for me, finding that my health declined, and fancying that the closeness of our situation might not agree with me, hired a small house at Richmond, where I am to stay all the summer. He is to come down

down when his business will permit him. I like this scheme vastly.

Our house here is small, but it is very pleasant, and in a very pure air: there is a little garden to it, and every thing is quite agreeable about it. The neighbourhood is genteel; there are some odd people, indeed, every where; but the gardens, the play-house, and the company in general, make the place cheerful: any place must be preferable to that in which we lived in town. Mr. Lawson begins to think as I do, and seems extremely pleased that he has met with so pleasant a retreat for me.

I have been here but a week; I have made some acquaintance, however, already, so that I dare say I shall not find the time hang upon my hands, even

when Mr. Lawfon cannot come down. In short, I now live and breathe again out of that odious Lane, and fancy I shall recover my health and spirits.

I have heard, since my arrival, something that will please you, Cecy, as it will, I hope, tend to cure me of my infatuation—I have heard that Beaumont and Lady Ann do not agree at all; that they are, indeed, very unhappy. Now you know, if he cannot agree with a woman who was every thing he and his family could wish, he would certainly have been miserable with me. I am better therefore as I am.

I wish you would come and spend a week or two with me—How delighted

lighted I should be to talk over our happy days at Mrs. D——'s!

In Continuation.

I have just received a visit from Mr. Grindall—To my no small surprise he appeared to be very much displeased with my present situation. It is hard, Cecilia, to find something to disgust and put one out of conceit with life every where. I was beginning to be contented, and now he wants to make me uneasy.

He opened the conversation by saying, that he was sorry to see I had found it necessary to remove to such a distance from Mr. Lawson's house in town, as I must either live separated from my husband, or put him to the greatest inconvenience.

convenience. "He must either neglect his business, continued he, or leave it to the care of others, if he comes down to you."

I coloured, and looked foolish. I was vexed to be chid for nothing. I was also sorry to have Mr. Lawson blamed for his kindness to me.

I told him, that we had not taken the house at Richmond with any design to be separated; adding, that I hoped Mr. Lawson's business would not be injured by his generous proceeding, as he had taken the house entirely on account of my health, which had been very much impaired by the closeness of the city.

"You might have pitched upon a place in a very wholesome situation, said he,

he, a few miles from London, and then Mr. Lawson might have come down to you of an evening when his business was done. I do not think that a married woman consults her interest when she encourages a separation, which must be the case when she and her husband live in different houses. You certainly must know that business cannot be carried on without a constant application, and that those who follow it should always be upon the spot. What occasion has Mr. Lawson for a wife if she is not to live with him? She ought not to be so extravagant as to desire him to hire other people to do what he can do himself, that he may sit idle with her at her country-house."

I made little or no reply to this speech: I thought it best to be upon

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my guard, lest I should be tempted to say something to draw a more ill-natured answer from him—I was hurt, however, by the proofs he had given me of his disapprobation, and as soon as he left me, I burst into tears. My spirits are still, at times, excessively low.

When Mr. Lawton came home, he expressed the most affectionate concern at my uneasiness, and discovered a great dislike to Mr. Grindall, for having spoken so freely to me; assuring me, that I should always live where I pleased, and in what manner I pleased: adding, that instead of neglecting his business, he would apply with more assiduity than ever, that he might be able, by improving his fortune, to furnish sweet Kitty with every thing she

I will

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I will confess I could not help being delighted with this new proof of his tenderness; and I discovered so much satisfaction at it that he told me he had never known what real happiness was till that moment. Let me, therefore, intreat you, my dear Miss Camden, to think of visiting

your affectionate,

C. LAWSON

P. S. When I repeated my invitation I did not consider how little reason I had to expect your compliance with it. You cannot, I suppose, think of leaving your Charles.

E's

LET

LETTER XL

Miss CAMDEN to Mrs. LAURENCE

THOUGH you do not hear from me so often, but I am afraid you will not be pleased to find me of Mr. Laurence's opinion, with regard to your house. I not only think like most men, I see; but I am convinced that I will see consequences which he has escaped his penetration—He was apprehensive, as you were, affected by what he had said, overwhelming you by a continuation of his objections to your Retirement.

Consider, my dear, when left by herself, her husband gives

opportunity to any other man to throw himself in her way: when her husband is not so agreeable to her as she wishes him, she is in a dangerous situation.—Take care, Kitty! you are in *such* a situation, and you may be rendered miserable by it for ever. You *may be*, indeed, as happy as any woman can expect to be, if you will. If you cannot love Mr. Lawton, supposing him to be the man you have described him, you deserve not—I was going to say—to be happy.

I thank you for your invitation, but cannot accept of it; not, however, on Charles's account, for I really think that a separation between us might be of some service, at present, to us both, as we do not seem to be quite happy together, because we do not

know whether we could support an absence. He will, I believe, make an excellent husband; he seems to be so soft, so supple, so easily to be led to any thing. Yet were he married, he would, perhaps, change his humour entirely—Men are as capricious as we are, Kitty, though they do not think so. I am, indeed, of opinion that a little caprice is very necessary to keep us upon a par with some of them, provided we do not carry it to improper lengths. 'Tis a nice point to manage, you know.

My father has had a return of his gout, which will not permit me to leave him: but if I had no such justifiable apology to urge for staying at home, I would not come to keep you at Richmond, as I think you ought to

to be in Crooked Lane. If I were married, Kitty, I would not, on any account, leave my husband, lest he should, availing himself of my example, leave me. Mr. Lawton may, just now, be transported to find you receive pleasure from any thing he can say or do; but he may, by and by, see things in a very different light, and blame you, possibly, for having so readily accepted of his offer of a house in the country, where you could not, you know, have so much of his company, as if you remained in London. I will not, therefore, by coming to Richmond, contribute to your continuance there. You may live to repent of your indiscreet choice. Besides, I shall be much too giddy for you just now—I chuse rather to write to you, than talk to you. It does not become a young girl,

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as I am, to correct a grave, sober matron, as you are: but I can say any thing, at any time, with my pen, and so I continue to subscribe myself,

most affectionately your's,

C. CAMDEN.

L E T T E R XLIV.

Mr. BEAUMONT to Mr. FOLEY.

LADY Ann grows intolerable. She is the vainest, the proudest, the most inconsistent of women. How sincerely do I repent of my marriage with her! There is no such thing as getting rid of her; she follows me like my shadow; she absolutely haunts me. There is no man of fashion, I believe, seen.

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seen so much with his wife as I am ; but it is not *my* fault : I never would come near her, I assure you, if I could help it ; she is pretty sure of that by this time, and therefore pursues me wherever I go, not to please *herself*, but to plague *me*. Had I taken Kitty Lester now, I could have moulded her to my humour ; but my family-pride put a curb upon my inclination, and prompted me to marry, like a cursed fool, a woman, because she had birth, beauty, and fortune, to gratify my warmest wishes ; and because I dreaded the clamorous reproaches of a pack of haughty relations, I have united myself to the veriest tyrant in petticoats that ever existed.

Kitty is married, I hear, and to the man whom she so much disliked, so
that

that we are both unhappy; we have both, I suppose, sacrificed ourselves to gold. I curse myself for a mean-spirited fellow, as much as I curse my wife; but there is no remedy for me, unless I could catch her ladyship making herself amends for my indifference in the arms of some scoundrel.—Unfortunately, she is too fond of me at present to give me any encouraging hopes. Yet I should not be exceedingly pleased neither, to have the woman who had so tenderly loved me, take up with the first low impudent fellow who comes in her way. The husband, upon such occasions, is always most strangely scandalized, when the wife, in fact, is only to be condemned. I don't like it—I like nothing just now.

I am going to spend a few days at ~~Club~~ with Lord Hilton—Any where
to

to be out of the way of my wife, at present. Possibly, she will think I am gone to a girl. Let her: if she suspects me without reason, I ought to punish her by realizing her apprehensions.

Adieu.

EL. BEAUMONT.

LETTER XLV.

Mrs. LAWSON to Miss CAMDEN.

INDDED, my Geoy, were it possible
for me to be angry with you for
any thing, I should tell you that your
last letter was too severe. I was just
going to be reconciled, a little, to my
way of life, and you have put me
quite

quite out of conceit with it—Are you not unkind, my dear?

I cannot be of *your* opinion, and Mr. Grindall's, with regard to my situation; and while Mr. Lawson seems pleased with it, I *must* think I have some merit in being pleased with it also. Besides, I must beg leave to differ also from you, with regard to the necessity there is for a woman always to be with her husband. It has not only been a long-received opinion, but I believe it is a certain truth, that men are fond of variety, and if so, to cloy them with our company is to act very indiscreetly, and it may yet be dangerous to keep them at too great a distance. I shall therefore, I hope, keep the happy medium. Mr. Lawson, by being sometimes separated from
me,

me, will, I think, return to me with new pleasure—However that may be, I know I find myself better here ; so much better, indeed, that Mr. Lawson tells me, I grow handsomer and handsomer every day. There is encouragement for us both to pursue a plan which has been of so much advantage to us. To make my situation here additionally agreeable, the gardens here are so pleasant, that I wander in them for hours, and think over past scenes with more tranquility than I ever expected to feel.

Mr. Lawson seems quite pleased to see me more cheerful than I was in town ; he tells me that he can manage his business, and yet come down frequently, with great ease. He gives
me

me much pleasure by saying so, as I find many agreeable people here, more suitable to my taste, than those stiff people in our *Lane*, who were so proud, of I never could tell what, that I was never easy in their company: where people are haughty, and assuming, there can be no satisfaction in their society. I could find a great deal of society here, were I but able to blot a particular circumstance from my memory; my endeavours to forget it have hitherto been unsuccessful. Time, I fancy, will have more effect than any thing I can do; to which I may add *your* company, if you would favour me with it; but that is not, I see, to be expected, unless a certain gentleman could be of your party—Till that day arrives, I must be content with only
your

your letters, which will be ever highly acceptable to your

sincerely affectionate,

C. LAWSON.

LETTER XLVI.

Mr. BEAUMONT to Mr. FOLEY.

JUST returned from a rencontre with my favourite Kitty, once Kitty Lester, now Kitty Lawson—Curse on the name—And yet it may be of service to me in the end. We cannot marry now, but we can love—Marrying, you know, was never my taste: though I have gone through the ceremony once, they shall never get me to go through it a second time—Besides, Kate is married

24. ~~THE~~ ~~SECRET~~ ~~CONNECTIONS~~

ted his. and here will, ~~consequently~~.
it is naturally ~~between~~ as : there
may be ~~some~~ ~~more~~ ~~love~~ ~~however~~ ~~is~~
I said before. If I am ~~correctly~~, our
relative ~~positions~~ will have no
power to free our hearts against each
other. The ~~union~~, therefore, may be
called the ~~union~~, ~~perhaps~~, but our be-
ing ~~not~~ married.

Coming through Richmond, on Sun-
day evening, in Blackwood's Phaeton,
in our way to London, from Lord Hel-
ton's, he proposed to stop, and to take
a turn in the gardens. I agreed, merely
because I was in no haste to return to
my wife.

We found the gardens full of com-
pany.

Passing

Passing through a little groupe of women who had only one man with them, I recognized Kitty, my pretty Kitty, more fresh and blooming than ever.

I fixed my eager eyes on her. She knew me instantly ; the roses forsook her cheeks. She started, and seemed ready to scream ; she recovered herself, however, and then, with a languishing blush averted her head.

I would have turned, and followed her, but I thought that her husband eyed me. He looked like a knowing-one. He is a pretty, clean-limbed young fellow, but Kitty's heart is still mine, or I am much mistaken. Her emotions strongly marked her feelings. I thought we should have met again ;
she

she had, however, either quitted the walk, or the thickening crowd concealed her from my sight.

I staid till it was just dark ; a drizzling shower began to fall, and hurried every female out of the gardens, or to a sheltered seat—One of them scuttling by to gain the covert of an alcove, happened to catch Blackwood's eye ; he dragged me in pursuit after her. The first object which struck me was Kitty, and—without her tyrant.

She started, a second time, at my near approach, and looked as if she thought it was her duty to avoid me, but knew not how. She is a novice, at present, in these matters—She could neither fly nor hide. Putting on, therefore, a good assurance, I advanced,
and

and boldly seizing her hand, detained it with a gentle pressure, while I asked her a few insignificant questions after her health, &c. &c. questions which did neither good nor harm ; they only favoured me with an opportunity to gaze on her improved features, and to enjoy a confusion which gave her, in my opinion, new beauties. She struggled, however, to get from me, and, turning her face aside, seemed to be uneasy at my continuing to hold her.

One of her companions, at that moment, observing me entirely attentive to *her*, I suppose, said, “ Mr. Lawson will soon be here with the cloaks, and then it will be our best way to get out of the gardens as fast as we can.”

I then, softening my voice, said to her, “ You will not surely think of
VOL. II. F going

She looked frightened at the sight of him ; broke from me hastily, and as hastily put on the things he had brought. He assisted in wrapping her up with the utmost care. He seemed very fond of her ; and I thought, for I observed her closely, that she behaved with great propriety to *him*.

He looked again at *me*, and then took his wife with him. A civil enquiry after her health will be absolutely necessary. However, such an enquiry shall not be made when *he* is in the way.

What a gentle creature is Kitty, compared to Lady Ann !

I returned to town that evening, and found her Ladyship in a confounded
ill

ill humour : but none of her humours shall hinder me from going where I please ; they will rather drive me more frequently from home.

Adieu.

E. BEAUMONT.

L E T T E R XLVII.

Mrs. LAWSON to Miss CAMDEN.

Richmond.

OH, my dear Cecilia ! in what a strange situation have I been ?— I have had an unexpected meeting with Mr. Beaumont. Indeed I could not help it ; and yet you may, like Mr. Lawson, imagine that our interview was premeditated. Mr. Lawson has not,

F 3 indeed,

indeed, directly charged me with having met Mr. Beaumont by design ; but I am pretty sure, by his behaviour, that he thinks so.

A young lady, a Miss Rochet, who lives but a few doors off, came to drink tea with me, yesterday in the afternoon, and asked me to go to walk in the gardens with her.

As I liked such a scheme prodigiously, I immediately consented.

Mr. Lawson who sat by, said, he believed there would be rain, adding, that if only a slight shower should fall I might be very wet before I could get home, or find any shelter.

I look-

I looked out at the window, and unluckily replied, that I fancied it would be a fine evening.

“Why it rains now, Kitty,” said he.

“Pshaw! only a few heat drops, cried Miss Rochet; it will be vastly pleasant.”

I hesitated, and looked at Mr. Lawson, who taking hold of both my hands and drawing me again to the window, said, “Look there, my dear, see how cloudy it is to the windward.”

I made no answer: I had really a mind to go, I will confess. Miss Rochet continued to persuade me, and said that all the world would be there.

“So much the worse, replied Mr. Lawson; it will be the more difficult to get either a dry seat or a carriage.”

However, as he did not positively declare that I should not go, I went with my lively companion—Very pleasant it was indeed.

In the great walk I met Mr. Beaumont, leaning upon a gentleman’s arm.

I cannot express what I felt: I am not sure that I did not say something, but I hope I did not. I am certain, however, that I trembled all over. I had hold of Mr. Lawson’s arm, or I should have fallen, I believe.

He asked me what was the matter?

I an-

I answered, "Nothing:" for I did, not indeed, know what to say.

He led me a little out of the crowd, and we continued to walk till it began to rain.

Mr. Lawson then said, "If we make haste we may get home before the rain can hurt us."

Miss Rochet, replied, "We shall be wet through," and proposed running to some covered seat where we might stay till it was fair.

I followed her.

Mr. Lawson then told us that he would run home and fetch our cloaks.

E 5:

As

As soon as he was gone Mr. Beaumont came to the seat we occupied.

He seized my hand, and asked me how I did, and where I lived ? adding, that he was transported to see me.

I know not what answer I returned ; I was extremely embarrassed. I tried to disengage myself from him, but he still detained my hand in a manner which obliged me to sit down.

The wind blew the rain upon us. He placed himself close by my side ; so close, indeed, that I was abashed, and disconcerted, lest his behaviour to me should be taken notice of. Besides, he said a great many things that should not have been heard by any body else. I was also afraid that
Mr.

Mr. Lawson should be displeased to see me with him. I started up, therefore, the moment he came, put on the cloak he had brought, and hurried home.

Miss Rochet followed us.

In our way home, Mr. Lawson, asked me, who that gentleman was, who seemed so well acquainted with me?

I coloured like scarlet, while I replied, "Mr. Beaumont."

"He is married."

I made no answer; I had neither strength nor spirits left; I complained of being out of breath; I spoke, indeed, partly, but not all the truth.

No sooner had Miss Rochet pulled off her wet hat and cloak, than she began to railly me about the pretty fellow, as she called him, who had been so careful to keep me from the rain.

I strove to silence her, but to no purpose; my efforts only made her more provoking.

Mr. Lawson looked, I thought, dissatisfied, yet he behaved very kindly to me—I do not believe, however, that he was pleased to leave me behind him, when he went to London this morning, for he asked me twice to go with him, and I, really, *would have* accompanied him, had I been well; had I recovered myself from the fatigue of the preceding evening.

I told

I told him, that I actually could not go with him, being very much indisposed.

He appeared to leave me with great reluctance : but he went away, at last.

I have been fluttered, I have fretted ever since. I can in no shape help what has happened, but I wish I had not seen Mr. Beaumont ; and yet I certainly felt emotions at his behaviour which threw my spirits into a pleasing agitation for the remainder of the night, which hindered me from sleeping, and rendered Mr. Lawson uneasy, as he feared that I had caught cold from the damps. I am not yet recovered—I cannot help wishing to dwell on every particular that has past ; but I cannot mention them to any body, except
your-

yourself, in whose faithful bosom I
can safely repose every secret of my
own.

I am,

yours ever sincerely,

C. LAWSON.

LETTER XLVIII.

Miss CAMDEN to Mrs. LAWSON.

I READ you last with great concern,
because you seem to be upon the
brink of a precipice: Indeed, Kitty,
I am very sorry to find that you met
with Mr. Beaumont, and am still more
sorry as he took so much notice of you.
He was attentive to you, either with
a very bad design, or else he treated
you

you with an unkindness which gives me no favourable opinion of his head or of his heart.

You, also, my dear, have been to blame; though I am willing to believe not intentionally.

You see now, Kitty, that Mr. Grindall was right. Had you never had a house at Richmond, you would not, in all probability, have met with this Beaumont. You would not have been acquainted with this Miss Rochet, who is, like most other Misses, always in mischief, for want of something better to do, or imitating all her most ridiculous acquaintance, because she is determined to live like the rest of the world—A woman cannot make a more dangerous determination. How much
safer

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safer and better, my dear Kitty, would you have been at your house in Crooked-Lane, out of the reach of such polite neighbours ! However, this piece of folly, or ill luck, call it which you please, is past : you have nothing now to do but to look forward, and to prevent any future indiscretions. In order to act with prudence, you must leave Richmond immediately, you must remove to London with your husband, and let him see you always by his side. How very thoughtless were you to refuse to accompany him the very next day, when he so much pressed you ! Was not your refusal sufficient to create suspicions ? When they are once raised, who can tell whether they will ever be laid ? Besides, child, you are not fit to be trusted either with Beaumont or yourself again. Fly, therefore, my
dear

dear Kitty, fly, before it is too late, and before the worst of evils lay fast hold of you ; fly, and let me soon have the pleasure of receiving a reply to this, dated from Crooked-Lane. It will, believe me, give me more pleasure dated from thence, than from St. James's.

I am,

yours ever-affectionately,

C. CAMDEN.

LETTER XLIX.

Mr. BEAUMONT to Mr. FOLEY.

I HAVE made my second appearance at Richmond with success, and it has filled me with the most animating hopes.

Gueffing

Gueſſing that the huſband—(I had no deſire to encounter him; he has a pair of penetrating eyes) would be in London about the middle of the week, I mounted my horſe, one morning, and riding up to his gate, aſked, if Mrs. Lawſon was at home?

An anſwer was returned in the affirmative, and the ſervant deſired to know my name.

I ſaid it was no matter, and followed him into the parlour.

I found Kitty in the neateſt undreſs imaginable, placing ſome flowers, which ſhe had juſt gathered, in the moſt elegant Chineſe vaſe I ever beheld,

The

The colour which mounted into her cheeks on my sudden appearance, made her look more beautiful than ever.

Sitting down by her, I complimented her upon the happy arrangement of her flowers, and told her that I hoped she had not caught any cold by hurrying home in the rain the Sunday-night. "Indeed, my dearest Kitty, continued I, you left the gardens when every body thought it was beginning to grow pleasant: the rain went off, and I should have found it a delicious evening if I had been blest with *your* company."

She blushed again, and bowed, involuntarily, at my compliments, which not only tickled her ear, I saw plainly, but touched her heart.

"But

“ But really, my dear Mrs. Lawfon, added I, these husbands are apt to be troublesome.”

“ Mr. Lawfon, Sir, replied she, with a charming simplicity—I could have killed her for speaking so well of him—Mr. Lawfon is very obliging, he never restrains me in any thing.”

“ You love him then ? said I, peevishly—Happy Lawfon !”

She sighed, she trembled, and hung her head.

“ How unfortunate have I been, continued I, never to have been able to make an impression upon that amiable heart, tender to every thing but *me* ! How exceedingly have I lamented
my

my cruel fate, that would not suffer me to prevail on you to listen to my passion ! Had you met me that day, Mrs. Lawson, I should not have been doomed to spend my life with Lady Ann, a woman every way unsuitable to me ; totally unlike my once dear, gentle Kitty !”

She looked at me while I spoke, as if she greedily devoured my words. When I stopped, she replied, with a faltering voice, “ For Heaven’s sake, Mr. Beaumont, do not blame *me* ! you know you had long determined to marry Lady Ann—Had you met me ever so often, you would not have married me.”

“ You tell me so now, Madam, because you know that it is, at present,
out

out of my power to be yours ; but you have made me wretched, and can only excuse yourself by condemning *me*."

" For the love of Heaven, Mr. Beaumont, cried she, with her sweet eyes full of tears, spare me ; I have not deserved these reproaches. I loved you but too well, you know I did ; and had you intended to act honourably by me—I never should have had, continued she, with a deep sigh, any title to the name I bear. But that is no matter ; all has long been over between us ; and I beg you would forbear, at least, to revive the grief I felt at being under the cruel necessity of parting with—But let me stop here : it is not fit for the wife of Mr. Lawson to say more to any other man."

Here

Here the charming girl hung her lovely head, like a rose drooping on its stalk; her eyes were overcharged with tears, which fell, like dew-drops, on her snowy bosom. I could not bear the grief I had partly occasioned." Yet why, after all, was she obliged to marry Lawson, because I married Lady Ann?—Her amiable distress, however, quite softened my heart.

I sat down by her, pressed her hands in mine, and begged her to be composed.

"Let us, my lovely Kitty, said I, endeavour to forget what is past; we have, both, perhaps been teased into measures which have rendered us very unhappy: but though they have tied us to those we hate, not all the powers
on

on earth can hinder us from still loving each other with the most unabated passion."

"Oh! do not talk thus, Mr. Beaumont, answered the dear weeping girl; we must not think any more of each other. I have the good fortune to be married to a very worthy man, though not to him whom I would have chosen; and as he behaves very affectionately to me, I ought to neglect nothing, on my part. Leave me, therefore, I intreat you—(struggling to get from me) leave me, I conjure you—I am infatuated to permit you to remain here."

"Why, replied I, gazing on her, with ardent tenderness, why, my lovely girl? Lawson is not at home."

No,

“No, answered she, with a timid confusion (sighing) ; but a woman of real virtue should be as careful to do nothing in her husband’s absence that he would not approve of, as if he was present.”

Dear Creature ! what an excellent wife she makes, even to the man whom she does not love ! I am more certain than ever, that her heart is mine alone

“My Kitty, said I, what is it you can be blamed for ? You do nothing ; you only receive the visit of an old and faithful friend, *en passant*. Is there, can there be any harm in that ?”

“There *must* be harm, replied she, in your staying so long ; it must occasion suspicions of impropriety. Be-

sides, added she, with a look of unutterable tenderness, I feel, but too sensibly, the danger of seeing and conversing with a man whom I once thought it no crime to love."

"Nor is there any crime in loving him now, my angel, cried I; married as we are to those whom we hate, who can blame us for following, mutually, our inclination?"

"*You* may think so, perhaps, Mr. Beaumont, said she, rising, with a spirit which I had never before observed in her, but which made her, I thought, look a thousand times handsomer, I shall, I am sure, be ever of another opinion: therefore, Sir, I insist upon your leaving me."

So

So peremptory a speech, with the looks and motions which accompanied it, convinced me that the freedom of my addressee (a freedom with which I had ever been accustomed to treat her) would not do, and that I should be obliged to change my battery. How soon do the very gentlest women, when they see their power over us, want impossibilities ! Now would this inconsistent girl have me continue to love her, and yet conform to her own idle ideas of virtue, at the same time. I see plainly that she doats on me, at the very moment she is sending me from her. She is married, and has acquired, with her matrimonial state, new notions of the dignity of a woman. I see plainly too, that she has, notwithstanding her virtue and her pride, a very susceptible heart, and that I have made a devilish bustle in it.

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However, as I found the lady upon filths, I thought it necessary just then to *fall* as the *rose* : fall therefore I did, low at her feet, and in the most pathetic tragedy-strain, intreated her not to drive me from her ; at least, not to dismiss me the object of her anger, as I could not support her frowns.

A few tears which I squeezed out, a sufficient number of sighs, added to my tender pressure of her hands, at length, softened her.

She desired me to rise.

I obeyed her, instantly, you may be sure, heartily glad of having finished my submissions.

She again begged me to leave her.

I was

I was determined to stay till I had obtained her permission to make her another visit: but I could not, with all my rhetoric, procure that permission from her lips, though her eyes very forcibly granted my request. I verily believe that she was apprehensive of being surprised, and therefore wished me gone. She trembled, and looked exceedingly frightened.

I left her, at last, with a firm resolution to see her again soon.

What an immense difference is there in women! Who would imagine that Lady Ann and Kitty were of the same species?

Prithee, what sort of woman have *you* fixed upon? From what you have
G. 3 hinted,

hinted, I am led to conclude that you have an attachment somewhere: there is no existing without one.

Adieu.

E. BEAUMONT.

LETTER L.

Mrs. LAWSON to Miss CAMDEN.

I WISH, my dear, sincerely wish, that I had taken your advice, and gone to town with Mr. Lawson, as my stay here has occasioned me new disquiet. But who can foresee events? And yet you, though at so great a distance from me, could prognosticate the anxiety I have endured by refusing to listen to Mr. Lawson's requests, or
to

to *your* admonitions. Who is always discreet? I fear *I* have been very imprudent; yet Heaven is my witness that I was not intentionally so. One folly too surely brings on another before we are aware; and we, at last, find it almost impossible to extricate ourselves from the difficulties in which our follies involve us.

When I refused to go to London with Mr. Lawson, I had no idea of seeing Mr. Beaumont again; yet, let me honestly confess, my Cecilia, that I have many times since reflected, with too great a degree of satisfaction, on his not having entirely forgotten me; on his still seeing me with pleasure. I am very sensible that I am greatly to blame for receiving that satisfaction, as I am married to Mr. Lawson.

What will you urge in my favour when I tell you that the unexpected sight of Beaumont, yesterday, gave me particular delight?

I was sitting alone in the parlour, on his entrance—He came, he said, on purpose to enquire after my health, fearing that I had caught cold by being exposed to the rain.

I cannot describe the surprise, nor the emotions I felt on his treating me with the same softening tenderness I had been used to from him before I was married: as little able am I to describe the agitation into which he threw my spirits when he declared that he still loved me, that he never had loved any other woman, and that had I met him he never should have married Lady Ann.

I could

I could not bear his cruel, his unjust reproaches ; they pierced me to the heart—I could not bear to think that *I*, who had loved him so sincerely, should have made him wretched. My soul was severely pained ; my tears flowed fast, as if they streamed to expiate a crime which I had never intentionally, I am sure, committed.

My grief deeply affected him. He looked most kindly on me ; and full of pity for my sorrows, endeavoured, with a thousand soothing expressions, to alleviate them. He declared that he still loved me ; that he ever would love *me*, as I might *him*, with unabated ardour.

I began to tremble at the danger to which I was exposed, and earnestly begged him to leave me, assuring him

that I could not, that I would not listen to him, as I was Mr. Lawson's wife. In short, my Cecilia, I began to be afraid of him, as I found his every look, word and gesture pleaded but too strongly in his favour.

He knelt at my feet, and with the most humiliated air affirmed, that he would never leave me till I had given him my permission to visit me again.

I had, fortunately, sufficient strength of mind to refuse his request, but I was so much frightened lest any body should come and discover us together, and so much affected by his tender submissions, submissions to which I had *not* been accustomed, that I did not know what to say.—My heart and my head were at variance.

At

At last he left me, and reason cheerfully told me that I had been wrong, very wrong. Delighted, however, to find myself still sincerely, still dearly beloved by the man on whom my heart had long doated, I could not extinguish the joy I felt, which was the more exquisite, coming unexpectedly upon me.

This moment my heart accused me of the greatest cruelty towards him, for having refused his request so ardently implored; the next, I felt a kind of horror at the thoughts of having, though only by my silence, given him encouragement to suppose that I would listen to any man upon so improper a subject, but my husband—It is impossible to acquaint you with all my pleasing, painful feelings, upon the agitating occasion, my dear Cecilia; but I triumphed at

last! Yes; virtue triumphed over inclination! I hope, therefore, that she who has gained such a victory over herself will be fortified against any future attacks. And yet, my friend, I am neither happy, nor even easy. Happy indeed I never *shall* be, and the flutter of my spirits, produced by Beaumont's two interviews with me, have made me unfit for any thing: the last interview particularly unhinged me. I am continually reflecting upon them both, either with pleasure or regret: with the most animating pleasure, with the most tormenting regret.

When Mr. Lawson came home he seemed extremely surpris'd at what he call'd so great a change in me. He teased me till I was out of all patience, with his enquiries, pressing me, repeatedly,

edly, to tell him what had happened to make me appear alternately so happy and so thoughtful, so anxiously thoughtful.

His repeated enquiries, and his unreasonable endearments together, wearied me quite out—I went, therefore, and shut myself up in my apartment to indulge myself in my own *reveries*.

Mr. Lawfon never appeared to me in so disagreeable a light before ; he was absolutely tiresome. One moment he fancied I was ill, and wanted me to take something ; the next, he thought I never looked so pretty, and could not let me rest, taking hold of my hands, patting my face, or pulling me into his lap even before the servants could get out of the room. In short,
he

He often puts me out of humour now; and often too out of countenance. I certainly, my friend, to own the truth, feel myself strangely altered since I saw Beaumont. The above-mentioned interviews have affected me beyond expression. I am determined, indeed, not to encourage his visits, as I would sooner die than injure Mr. Lawson in any shape; or give him the slightest reason to harbour suspicions unfavourable to my reputation. Yet I wish that he would not take so much notice of me; as his attention to me now can be of no advantage to *him*: the difference between *him* and Beaumont was but too striking before.

I have just run over what I have wrote; and find my letter a very foolish one. But let it go. Let me, however, in-
treat:

treat you to pardon, as well as pity all
the weakneſſes of

your ever affectionate,

C. LAWSON.

LETTER LI.

Mr. FOLEY to Mr. BEAUMONT.

I AM concerned, I am ſhocked at
your conduct ; and yet, at the ſame
time, I muſt confeſs that you have been,
by the very impropriety of your con-
duct, the cauſe of the greateſt felicity
to *me* which the world can beſtow.
Let me, therefore, from gratitude, from
friendſhip, from the warmeſt wiſhes
for your preſent and future happineſs,
prevail on you to liſten to me, and to
deſiſt

desist from your cruel, inhuman, proceedings against a poor, weak woman, who, but for *you*, might spend her days in peace and honour. To strengthen what I have to say to you, let me explain myself : let me tell you in what manner your happiness and mine can be any way connected, setting aside the friendship which has so long subsisted between us, and which will, I hope, be some inducement to you to give up all farther thoughts of Mrs. Lawson. But to my story :

I have frequently mentioned to you, a very amiable young neighbour of mine, who though she never seemed inclined to tolerate me as a lover, soon after our first meeting treated me with that easy politeness which makes an intimacy desirable ; and she has since so far

far honoured me, as to permit me to call myself her friend—I have long indeed been the lover, as well as the friend; but fearful of making the wished-for confession, lest I should be rejected, I have been extremely attentive to her every look and motion.

The other day, I was thrown into great perplexity and distress upon her receiving a proposal of marriage from a man of rank, fortune and character: but I had, soon afterwards, the happiness to hear her refuse it, though I had hardly spirits left to listen to what she said.

When I recovered my senses, and began to reflect upon what was past, I gave up all hopes of ever persuading her to accept of me. I began, indeed, to
imagine

“ If the disclosure of it, answered I, will give you any sort of relief, it will be a great point gained ; I shall think so, at least ; for I confess, I suffer more than I can express, in seeing you so unhappy. But I suppose, as I am urged by a selfish motive, you will not think my request deserves any consideration.”

She blushed, and sighed, but made no reply.

I became encouraged, by this behaviour, to press her to open her heart to me—“ You have, for some time, Madam, continued I, honoured me, by giving me a permission to offer you my friendship ; now is the time for you to put that friendship to the test. Try me ; there is nothing I shall think too difficult,”

difficult, if you can put me in a way to oblige you."

"I really do not know, answered she, with great good humour, which way you can be of any service to me in this affair, Mr. Foley; I do not know that any body can: but if I thought that the communication of my uneasiness would, in the slightest degree, contribute to the relief of it, I would freely speak, for I dare believe that I may trust *you*."

"You *may*, replied I, with the life of your dearest friend; not my own shall be dearer to me."

She bowed, and thanking me, declared that she was under the greatest concern for a very particular friend,
who

who was, she feared, from being married to a man whom she did not love, but too near falling a sacrifice to *him* on whom she first placed her affections."

Your affair with your favourite Kitty at that instant darted into my mind. I thought there appeared to be a similarity in the situations, and I replied—"A friend of mine is also, I fear, on the point of prevailing on a poor girl (whom he fancies he has long loved, but whose inequality, with regard to birth and fortune, prevented him from marrying her) to gratify his now *unlawful* passion for her, as he cannot gratify it without deeply injuring her husband, who, certainly, does not deserve to be dishonoured by either of them."

"These

“ These cases are similar ones, indeed, said she ; and if I imagined that the parties concerned were the same, you might be of service to me, by attacking the gentleman upon the meanness and cruelty of his behaviour, while I acquainted my friend with the infamous designs against her peace, and put her upon her guard.”

My heart bounded at the thoughts of having it in my power to make myself useful to her, and I gave her sufficient hints, without betraying your secret, to assure her, that Mrs. Lawton and Mr. Beaumont were the parties concerned.

“ Oh, Mr. Foley ! exclaimed she, what a wretch is your friend then ! How infamous is he to take advantage
of

of a poor ignorant girl's weakness for him ! My dear Kitty's heart is, I verily believe, as innocent, as harmless, as an infant's ; but she has been, unfortunately, thrown into the way of that artful man, who, in order to gratify his own appetites, took pains to induce her to imagine that he had only *her* happiness in view. With a cruel perseverance he still pursues her, and endeavours to persuade her to render herself for ever miserable, by being false to her husband. Good Heaven ! continued she, what wretches are men !”

“ Not all, I hope, Miss Camden, replied I. Do not condemn every man, for the sake of one. I hope, at least, you have never seen any thing in *me*, Madam, to make you suppose me capable of acting in so unwarrantable a manner.”

“ I have

“ I have never seen you, answered she with great vivacity, with the woman you may think you love.”

“ But you have seen me, replied I with a faltering voice and agitated looks, you have long seen, you now see me with the woman whom I certainly adore ; but my respect, equal to my tenderness, has hitherto prevented me from declaring my feelings. I now, flattering myself that I may be of some service to *you* by serving your *friend*, venture to declare the strong passion which I have long felt for you.”

She blushed extremely, and looked at me, at first, as if she would awe me into silence with the fire of her eyes.

“Do you expect, Sir, said she, to recommend yourself to me at this time, by such a declaration?”

This reply was sufficient to put so timid a fellow as I have lately been, quite to rout: but I cannot tell how it was, I felt myself, just then, in an unusual flow of spirits, though I was not a little hurt by the reception she gave me.

I bowed, and asked her pardon—“I am quite sorry, Madam, continued I, to find that I have been so far mistaken in you—I have declared the sentiments of my heart, because I can no longer conceal them; I was unhappy in a state of suspense; I can but be unhappy by a certain refusal.”

Here

Here I fighed, and was filent—She did not, I think, look better pleased than myself. . I determined, however, to fay no more ; but my feelings were pretty legible, I believe, in my countenance.

I took up a book which lay in the window, and ſhe put her hand into her work-bag.

I turned over the leaves without knowing a fingle ſyllable of what I read ; and I fancied that ſhe was not much more attentive to her work.

Stealing a look at her, now and then, I, at laſt, ſaw tears trickle down her face.

She ſoon perceived that I had found her out, and dashing them off with

H 2

her

her hand, said, " This poor girl runs in my head so much I can think of nothing else : " laying down her work.

I pitied her, I felt for her, and offered to do any thing in the world she thought proper, to bring Mrs. Lawson to a right sense of her danger.

" There is no bringing her to a right sense of it, replied she, while that artful wretch is bent upon her destruction. If you would save *her* you must talk to *him*. Try to make him sensible of the vileness of his conduct, and endeavour to prevail on him to withdraw himself from her entirely : though it really, added she, hurts me to ask favours of such a villain."

Excuse me, Ned ; you see what a character you have gained.

- I told

I told her that I would write immediately to you, and that she should guide my pen.

“No, answered she, what you write shall be all your own. You know my sentiments, and I hope you have honour enough to think with me upon a point of such importance, as the saving a poor, deluded, young creature from infamy.”

I replied, “that I wished we thought alike about every point.”

“Concerning what point do we differ?” said she, eagerly.

“The most important one to *me*, said I—You are angry with me for loving you, and you may, with much

more reason, be offended with me, because you are so amiable. Do but consent to receive me in the character in which I wish to appear, and I will exert all my influence over my friend to make him change his conduct towards Mrs. Lawson."

"The man who will not perform a moral action, replied she, without being bribed to it, is unworthy of a thought, and, consequently, can never be looked on by me in the wished-for light."

"I am not that man, Madam, said I. I can bring proofs of my having, from Mr. Beaumont's first acquaintance with Miss Lester, dissuaded him from endeavouring to gain her affections, unless he intended to marry her. However, though you, by refusing to grant
me

me the honour I aspire to, will make me completely wretched, I will not, for a single moment, be forgetful or negligent of what I owe to the woman whom I love, and to myself. You need not, therefore, entertain the smallest doubt of my taking every method in my power to induce Mr. Beaumont to desist from a pursuit which must lessen him in every body's eyes, and be, in the highest degree, injurious to the woman to whom he pretends to be affectionately attached."

She looked earnestly at me, for a moment, and then said, "I promise, I will not be ungrateful, if you can produce an alteration in your friend, so necessary to my future happiness."

H 4.  I thank-

I thanked her, by pressing her hand to my lips.

And now, Ned, you are every way bound to throw up a design which will do you the greatest discredit, and render for ever miserable a poor girl, who, but for you, might be both good and happy. Reflect seriously upon the consequences with which the commission of your cruel design must, necessarily, be attended ; stop in time, and believe me to be, on all occasions,

particularly on this,

your very sincere friend,

C. FOLEY.

L E T.

L E T T E R LII.

Lady ANN BEAUMONT to Mrs. RYDER.

IT is as I expected. Beaumont is in pursuit of that mean, little creature his former favourite, Kitty Lester, since married to a man in the city, one Law-son ; but I fancy I shall cure him of his passion for her. I have found out where her husband lives in London ; but it seems he has taken a house for her at Richmond, because she could not breathe the city air—What an affected delicacy indeed ! as if such creatures feelings were not suitable to the lowness of their extraction, and the meanness of their education. So while the husband, a very tame animal, no doubt, is labouring in his dirty vocation, his dainty

H 5

wife,

wife is acting the fine lady at Richmond. Surely affectation was never carried to such a nauseous height !—If you ever in your life happen to fall in the way of such creatures as those, you will always find them monstrously ridiculous : they carry their folly and vanity, indeed, to the most incredible lengths.

I shall take a method to acquaint Lawson with his wife's conduct. Let him lock her up. When Beaumont finds that she is *un-come-at-able*, he may, after the first disappointment become more reasonable.

Lawson shall not know from whence the intelligence comes. If it has the desired effect it will give some relief to the anxious mind of

yours, &c.

ANN BEAUMONT.

L E T-

LETTER LIII.

Mr. BEAUMONT to Mr. FOLEY.

I Renounce your friendship, I despise your principles ; they must be detestable, since they have prompted you to betray your friend, and to expose the secrets of his heart to a woman, to a vain, idle, fantastic, silly woman, who puffed up with your praises, thinks herself fit to deal out discretion to her acquaintance. But let her take care what she says about her friend Mrs. Lawson, who has prudence sufficient to direct herself, without Miss Camden's very wise admonitions. I desire, therefore, and so does Mrs. Lawson, that she will not give herself any more trouble about her, as any thing farther, either from her or

H 6

you,

you, will be esteemed very impertinent,
by

E. BEAUMONT.

LETTER LIV.

To Mr. LAWSON.

S I R,

WHILE you are following your
business, or your pleasure, in
London, Mrs. Lawson amuses herself
by receiving the visits of a young man
of fashion who has long distinguished
her. You may make what use you
please of this information, from

your unknown

humble servant,

ANONYMOUS.

LET.

L E T T E R L V.

Miss CAMDEN to Mrs. LAWSON.

IS it possible then, that Mrs. Lawson can be so abandoned as to have entered into an intimate connection with a man who, lost to all sentiments of honour and virtue, presumes to solicit her to become false to her husband? By such a conduct you must not only bring everlasting infamy upon yourself and family, but you must render him equally culpable in his behaviour to a wife to whom he has sworn to be true. What epithet is bad enough for the man who dares insist, in your name, upon your friend's forbearing to warn you of your danger, and to persuade you to guard against it? Yet to this man Mrs.
Lawson

I really cannot express my surprise at your letter ; it has pained me exceedingly. I think I never shall deserve your reproaches : I cannot bear to receive them from my Cecilia. I have been weak, but I have never given Mr. Beaumont the least reason to suppose that I will be the character you mention. You must certainly have been imposed upon. Explain yourself more fully, my dear Cecilia ; I never wanted your friendship so much as I do at this moment. I want your kind, your friendly assistance to guard me against Beaumont, to guard me against myself. But I am, and ever shall be,

your sincerely affectionate

C. LAWSON.

L E T-

L E T T E R LVII.

Mr. LAWSON to Mr. GRINDALL.

Dear Sir,

I AM extremely distressed, being thrown into a situation which requires the greatest delicacy in my conduct, as I must, necessarily, be greatly ruffled by several irritating circumstances.

I am very much afraid of wanting temper to regulate my behaviour properly upon some trying occasions which may happen to occur, and should be glad to receive your advice and assistance; but as I cannot well communicate the affair which so much perplexes me, and which gives me so much uneasiness
in

in this way, your spending a few days at Richmond, will be, in the highest degree, satisfactory to

your obliged

humble servant,

W. LAWSON.

P. S. If you can fet out for this place immediately, you will give me additional pleasure, and double my obligations to you, as I very much wish to have Mrs. Lawson see you here.

L E T-

LETTER LVIII.

Mr. GRINDALL to Mr. LAWSON.

Dear Lawson,

I AM very sorry that it is not in my power to comply with your request ; but I have been laid up these two days with my old complaint, the gout, and cannot stir hand or foot.

I am very much concerned to find that you have met with any thing to ruffle your naturally gentle disposition ; any thing which requires more delicacy of conduct than I believe *you* to be master of. There are undoubtedly some situations more critical than others : if you will venture to trust me, upon my assurance of secrecy, I will do
every

every thing in my power to serve you,
and I hope, I shall, notwithstanding
what may have happened to disconcert
you for the present, soon see you
restored to your former tranquility.

I am,
your sincere friend
and humble servant,
E. GRINDALL.

LETTER LIX.

Miss CAMDEN to Mrs. LAWSON.

IF your last declarations of ignorance,
with regard to Beaumont's insolent
letter to Mr. Foley, in which I was
mentioned as your friend and adviser,
may be depended upon, and if you
are

are really desirous of conquering a weakness which, if not immediately subdued, must end in your eternal ruin, I am still ready to give you all the assistance in my power. But your language is, at present, so different from that in which every body, as well as myself, will think it proper a married woman should express herself, that I still fear you are but half convinced of the absolute necessity of an entire change in your sentiments, as well as conduct. When that wished-for change happens, you will find a sincere friend in

C. CAMDEN.

L E T-

LETTER LX.

Mr. FOLEY to MRS CAMDEN.

I HAVE obeyed your commands, Madam, by endeavouring exactly to conform to the dictates of your excellent heart, with regard to Mrs. Lawfon.

I would take no denial, nor even an affront from Beaumont, though strongly provoked, when the cause of virtue, and the interest of your friend, required me to be calm.

I will confess, however, that it cost me not a little to put up with the treatment which I met with at first from him; and that I was, more than once,
tempted

tempted to prevent Mrs. Lawson from farther insults, and to revenge those she had already received, by demanding satisfaction. But my principles, with regard to duelling, would not suffer me to proceed in that manner. I began, therefore, fairly to reason the matter with Beaumont, and, at length, brought him to own that he was wrong.—“ Yet my aversion to Lady Ann, continued he, and my passion for Kitty, have tormented me to an inexpressible degree, ever since my marriage. Mrs. Lawson is not, I am sure, less unhappy than myself, and I pity her extremely, as I have great reason to believe that she loves me.”

“ And would you, said I, return that love by plunging a dagger into her bosom ?”

He

He started, and, for a while, endeavoured to confute every argument which I urged, applicable to his present situation; but finding himself baffled at last, he yielded, and confessed that he would give over a pursuit which would only, in all probability, render them both wretched. “I will not, however, added he, a second time, desert her, and give her room to believe me false, when I am really more attached to her than ever. I will see her once more, but only to acquaint her with my reasons for not seeing her again, unless we should both be at liberty to act as we please.”

I would fain have prevailed on him not to go any more to her, telling him that the very going to her, though with an intention not to repeat his visits,

was

was strongly to be condemned as she was a married woman, and ought on no account whatever to be visited by a man whom she loved, and who, from his inclination for her, must necessarily behave in such a manner as to keep up mutual prepossessions, which should be extinguished, as the increase of them must unavoidably contribute to their mutual unhappiness.

He made little or no reply to this, nor do I know whether he means to keep his word with me, and to see her but once more. When people are so thoroughly attached to each other, it is very difficult to prescribe rules for their conduct. The violence of their passions frequently makes them overleap the bounds of discretion, and even decency. I will, however, watch carefully over my friend, and hope to prevail upon him to

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I

give

give up a point, the gaining of which, were he to succeed, would occasion him nothing but remorse and vexation. I am sensible, by what I feel at present, that it is to very little purpose to attempt to persuade a man to abandon a woman whom he loves—At least, I know that not all the world could ever induce *me* to resign the hopes I have of inspiring you, one day, with a passion for *me* equal to my own. You will, possibly, call me presumptuous, insolent, and assuming; but even your anger, terrible as it is, Miss Camden, is still less to be dreaded than your indifference. Nothing can be more cold and chilling to a lover than neglect, as nothing would be more animating and encouraging than your attention and approbation, to, Madam,

your most obedient

and devoted

C. FOLEY.

L E T-

LETTER LX.

Mr. LAWSON to Mr. GRINDALL.

Dear Sir,

I AM extremely sorry to hear of your confinement: I should be charged with selfishness just at this time were not my esteem for Mr. Grindall too well known to him to make him question the sincerity of my wishes, at all times, for his health and happiness.

I was induced to wish so earnestly to see you at Richmond on my wife's account. She has unfortunately—I believe I may add, accidentally, met with Mr. Beaumont in the gardens here. I have since received a letter which informs me that he is frequently with her when I am at London.

I never was of opinion that anonymous letters ought to be encouraged, as I have known them occasion the greatest uneasiness without being in the least serviceable. I have also known them attended with happy consequences. In some suspicious situations they ought not surely to be slighted: I am very certain that Kitty has been a good deal changed of late; absent, or out of temper frequently; nor can all my persuasions get her to leave Richmond and come to me at London. I don't care to be rough with her, poor girl, because her spirits have been greatly fluttered: she may look upon me as a tyrant, and never be reconciled to me, if I am too warm with her.

If you had been well enough to come and spend a week or two with me you would

would not only have kept Mr. Beaumont at a distance, but you would have kindly, I know, taken an opportunity to hint to my wife the impropriety of her seeing Beaumont, and might, possibly, have prevailed on her to come to London, and leave a place where she is continually exposed to the sight of a man it would be prudent in her to avoid. You are not to be told how sincerely and how affectionately I love Kitty. I began to hope that I had made a progress in her esteem, but this unlucky interview has undone all, and made me almost despair of enjoying any farther satisfaction with her. What satisfaction with her, if Beaumont, cannot be kept out of her way, is to be expected by

your obliged

humble servant

W. LAWSON?

I 3

L E T.

LETTER LXI.

Mr. GRINDALL to Mr. LAWSON.

Dear Lawson,

I AM more than ever troubled at my confinement, but since I cannot serve you in person, let me advise you—though at another time it might be imprudent—to be down at Richmond as much as possible. Take your wife abroad, amuse her mind, or employ it upon something which may take off her thoughts from the man who must be very worthless indeed, married as he is himself, to pursue the wife of another. However, if your business will not permit you to leave London just now, bring Mrs. Lawson upon a visit to me—She will, I think, be more out of the way
here

here than with her mother, who is an idle, gossiping woman. Besides, in *my* opinion it will be much better that she should remain ignorant of her daughter's having seen this man again. If we can but separate them once more, you will be the more endeared to your wife, when she finds that though you have some reason to complain, you keep your complaints to yourself.

You see, my young friend, I very readily fall into your own way of thinking. Lenity has reformed numbers, severity has hardened as many, and made them glory in their vices.

Mrs. Lawson is not, I think, of a nature to persist in acting in opposition to her duty : but then she is easily led away by those whom she is fond of.

Could she be kept out of the way of this troublesome fellow, you would, I dare say, by small indulgencies, be able to persuade her to any thing. .

Hoping to see you, or to hear from you soon,

I am

your friend, and
humble servant,

E. GRINDALL.

LETTER LXII.

Mrs. LAWSON to Miss CAMDEN.

I Accept the offered terms of your renewed friendship with pleasure, my dear Cecilia. I will not see Mr. Beaumont

Beaumont, whatever I must suffer by refusing him; and however unhappy I may be, I will endeavour to be discreet.

Mr. Lawson has been with me these two days. He has proposed to me to go and stay a week or two with Mr. Grindall, who is confined at Clapton with the gout. I have consented, because I thought it prudent to comply with his request; but I suppose I shall be very melancholy there. Thus you see, my dear, I am content to sacrifice my pleasure to my duty. Will not this sacrifice restore my friend to

her ever affectionate,

C. LAWSON?

P. S. I was just going to pack up a few things to take with me when

I. 5.

my

my maid gave me the inclosed letter. I did not, at first, know from whom it came, but was reading it when Mr. Lawfon came in, unexpectedly. In a great hurry and confusion, I thrust it into my pocket, as it was not, you may imagine, fit for his perusal. Yet not even this letter, a copy of which I send you, shall tempt me to break my word with you. I have returned no answer to it. I dare not consent to see him even once more; I can only add that I will do all in my power to avoid him.

LET-

LETTER LXIII.

Mr. BEAUMONT to Mrs. LAWSON.

(Mentioned in the foregoing one.)

AFTER having been so often defired by you to follow you no longer, I am come to a resolution to comply with your request: yet is it possible that my Kitty, my once-loved, my still beloved Kitty, should desire never to see me again?

It is my fault, you will say, that we are separated. I cannot, I will not deny it. A foolish pride, an idle ambition, has deprived me of all I love; and what is worse, has obliged me to tie myself to one whom I hate, detest, abhor.

Would I could hear you say the same of this Lawson ! but though your mild, gentle spirit will not suffer you to rave like me, those sweet, those too-frequently averted eyes of yours, if I have not lost all my penetration, still tell me that I am preferred in your dear, faithful heart.

Under this flattering belief, can I resolve to give you up so readily ? No—'tis impossible ! I am determined, at least, to see you *once more*, if only to take a *last farewell*.

When you are irrecoverably gone,
what will be life to

your doating lover,

and most sincere friend,

E. BEAUMONT.

L. E. T.

LETTER LXIV.

Mr. LAWSON to Mr. GRINDALL.

Dear Sir,

I WAS just upon the point of bringing my wife to accept of your obliging invitation, when I was prevented by her sudden illness: which illness is, I believe, in some degree, owing to an alarm we had last night between eleven and twelve.

Some persons, at that time, attempted to get into the house.

I found Kitty a good deal frightened with it, and was in hopes it would have made her more willing either to go to London, or to come to you.

I really

I really believe she would have accompanied me to your house, if she had not been obliged to keep her chamber.

Yesterday I proposed sending for Mrs. Lester, but she desired that I would not send for her, as she hoped, by keeping herself quiet, and taking some medicines, she should soon recover.

I have complied, though against my own judgment, because I am willing to do every thing in my power to make her happy.

I shall be at Richmond, till she is better, as often as possible. I cannot say I am quite pleased with this attempt upon my house. I have secured a good pair of pistols, in case of a second

cond visit of the same kind, though I keep them out of Kitty's way, as I have often heard her express the greatest dislike to, and, indeed, terror at, any kind of fire-arms. But how can we, without such arms, defend either ourselves or our property from such desperate gangs of villains, who make no scruple to plunder every body almost at noon-day?

As soon as my wife is better, we will come to Clapton.

I begin to think that the anonymous letter which I received, was sent with a view only to make me uneasy: perhaps, by the very person it seemed to point out, by way of revenge, for having got his mistress from him. But of
this,

this, more when we meet. I hope this
will find you better, and am,

dear Sir,

your obliged humble servant,

W. LAWSON.

LETTER LXV.

From the SAME to the SAME.

Horwich

Dear Sir,

BY the date of this you will see that
I am far from home. I left my
home a scene of distress and desolation.
If you are able to be moved, let me in-
treat you to suffer yourself to be carried
thither.

You

You will, undoubtedly, be surprised at this request, but still more will you be surprised at the occasion of it.

I will explain myself as well as I can, agitated as my mind is beyond expression.

On Friday last, I wrote to you, to inform you that Kitty's illness prevented me from bringing her to you, agreeably to my promise; that we had been alarmed with an attempt to break into the house, and that I had brought down pistols.

As Kitty continued ill, I fully intended to stay at Richmond till Tuesday morning, but I was summoned to town in a hurry, on the Monday.

My

My impatience to see Kitty again, made me put off some of my business which ought to have been done, and I returned with all possible haste, to Richmond.

I arrived on Monday night, but not till after dark.

I found my wife extremely disordered. She had, for above a week, availed herself of her indisposition to sleep in a separate bed ; I, therefore, left her at ten o'Clock, and went down to the parlour.

After having read about half an hour in the parlour, I went up stairs in order to go to bed : but not finding myself in the least sleepy, and having my book in my pocket, I took it out and sat down to read.

When

When I had been so employed about an hour, I heard a noise like somebody walking up stairs very softly.

I opened my door immediately, but seeing nobody, I imagined that one of the servants might be going to bed.

I called out, "Who is there?"

Sally answered, "Only *me*, Sir."

I then shut my door.

While I was considering whether I should go to bed or not, I thought I heard somebody scream.

I opened my door a second time, and was certain that I heard a man's voice,
though

though he spoke softly, and in my wife's room.

I made but two steps to my pistols, which I had, ever since I purchased them, kept ready charged in my room, and then rushed into my wife's apartment.

There I saw, by the light of the lamp, not a house-breaker, as had expected, but Beaumont.

He started from the bed, the bed of my Kitty, as I entered the room.

I was scarce able, at first, to speak articulately, but I presented my pistol.

He fell back, and drew his sword, to defend himself.

At

At the same instant I saw my wife at my feet—"Hold, hold, cried she, for the love of heaven!"

I was too much enraged to listen to her: besides, had I stopped, I might have been run through the body: I, therefore, fired immediately.

They, both fell: *he*, from the wound he had received; *she* in a fainting fit.

When I saw them both to all appearance, dead upon the floor, the horror which I felt is not to be described.

I went to call for help. The two maids and the man burst into the room.

Sally cried out, "Oh, good God! my mistress and Mr. Beaumont are killed."

"My

“ My wife is not hurt, replied I ; take care of her—Do you, John run away for a surgeon.”

I staid to say no more, but hurried down stairs, and out of the house as fast as my legs could carry me : glad to quit a place where I had received so much injury, and in so hasty a manner revenged it.

There is now no doubt of my wife's infamy—Yet I was both ashamed and pained to see her pleading almost naked at my feet for her lover.

You may guess at the distraction I have been in ever since that fatal moment. I should have staid, perhaps, and have taken the consequences resulting from my too rash proceeding, could
I have

I have reconciled myself, in any shape, to the behaviour of my wife, whom I have fondly loved, and who has so ill repaid my affection. Do you then, my dear, good friend, who never apprehended these consequences from my marrying her, do you suffer yourself to be carried to her. You were her guardian; you were in the place of her father, be still a parent to her; make her sensible of her errors, and——but I cannot say any more upon this subject.

What I have done I did in my own defence; but it may prevent my return to England which I am on the point of leaving. I am, indeed, glad to leave a place which must continually remind me of what I wish to forget, yet it
never

never can be blotted from my memory.
In this unhappy situation, at present is
yours, &c.

W. LAWSON.

LETTER LXVI.

Lady ANN BEAUMONT to Mrs. RYDER.

WHAT misery, distress, and horror have I occasioned !

Beaumont, my dear Beaumont is, I fear, killed by the husband of that detestable Kitty. He was brought home yesterday dangerously wounded with a pistol by Lawson. If he dies the whole family shall lament the hour he entered their wretched doors.

I am

I am almost deprived of my reason by this dreadful event, and cannot support the inexpressible mortification which is added to my affliction, as I am certain that Beaumont actually preferred this little dirty trollop to me—And then to think that he will die by such a plebeian hand ! Surely I was infatuated to give any intelligence to such a fellow ; but I had no idea of his discovering a spirit which might shame many a man of nobler birth. Yet why do I talk ?—Would I had never known Beaumont ! or that *he* had never known this low creature ! or that I had been ignorant of his attachment to her ! In short, my brain turns round, and I shall grow distracted with thinking.

I wonder at myself for having written so much—but the agonies I feel are

insupportable. I must give them vent
or die. Come to me immediately, if you
have the smallest consideration for
your wretched friend,

ANN BEAUMONT.

L E T T E R LXVII.

Mrs. LESTER to Mrs. SAXBY.

A Pretty affair has happened ! a fine
piece of work indeed ! Would
you believe it ? Mr. Lawson has shot
Mr. Beaumont, the Earl of Beaumont's
second son ; and if he comes back to
England he will most certainly be
hanged, as my lord's family are violent-
ly exasperated against him. What a
dreadful thing for Kitty ! But to be sure
she

she was to blame ; she never had any notion of conducting this affair cleverly. Had she taken my advice, she might have been Mrs. Beaumont herself, by this time ; but I always said she had no art, no management at all. Poor girl ! she will suffer exceedingly, and so we shall all of us, through her folly. She now lies very ill, and has miscarried. Poor thing, I protest I pity her ! Why would she be so wrong-headed ? But people cannot always help their nonsense : and yet I declare I don't know what she has done ; only she accuses herself, and laments that she has been the occasion of all this. She cries night and day.

Mr. Grindall, who is very bad with the gout, is come hither, and is very much shocked, to be sure. Who would not be shocked ? He says it is a most

unhappy business, and that the less that is said about it the better. He will have Kitty go home with him, when she is able to be moved : and if Mr. Beaumont should die, he says she must go over to Holland to her husband. She sighs, and weeps, and wrings her hands; and only says that she is innocent, indeed she is innocent ; and so she may be ; but I say again that she always wanted management. Why, if she had had any cleverness about her she might have had Mr. Beaumont visit her now and then without all this fuss : the least contrivance in the world would have made things quite easy to all parties. A husband must be churlish, indeed, who will not let his wife see a friend sometimes in a proper manner : and supposing he refused, why, then she might, as I said before, have contrived

trived it when he was out of the way, and Beaumont might have come and gone, and no harm done ; and so I have told her : but, as she says, what signifies talking about it now. I wish, for my part, that it had never happened, or that it was all over, for I am quite confined without a soul to speak to, for Kitty is too ill to see any body ; and old Grindall sits always in the parlour, so that there I have no opportunity to speak to any body. I am really half dead with the vapours, and quite long for a little pool at quadrille. I always told you that this girl would be a great plague to me, and now she has made my words good. Cannot you come and spend a few days at Richmond ? You may sleep with me, and then when Kitty is a little better, I will try to persuade Grindall to make us up a little

K 3 party,

party, for there is no going on so. Do,
think of this, my dear Saxby, and you
will vastly oblige

your very affectionate,

but at this time,
very melancholy friend,

C. LESTER.

LETTER LXVIII.

Miss CAMDEN to Mr. FOLEY.

I HAVE been dreadfully alarmed by
a paragraph in this day's paper,
giving an account of Mr. Lawson's
shooting Mr. Beaumont whom he found
in his wife's apartment. If this be true
what will become of my poor friend?
I tremble while I write. For heaven's
fake,

fake, Mr. Foley, add to the favours you have already done me, by not only making every possible enquiry into the shocking particulars of this story, but by seeing Mr. Grindall, Mrs. Lester, or some of the family. Endeavour to learn from them in what manner I can best offer any consolation or assistance to the poor unfortunate creature. Whether she is innocent or guilty is now no longer the question. We are but too sure that she is unhappy, and that is sufficient to call forth all my affectionate compassion for her. You will, I know, have the goodness to excuse this trouble from

your already much obliged

humble servant,

C. CAMDEN.

LETTER LXIX.

Mr. FOLEY to Miss CAMDEN.

THE relation of the unfortunate rencontre between Beaumont and Mr. Lawson is but too true, and as the smallest of your commands, my dear Madam, will ever be sufficient to make me fly to obey them, I went immediately to Mrs. Lawson. They told me that she was exceedingly ill, and incapable of seeing any body.

Mrs. Lester came down to me, and gave me no favourable opinion of her daughter's conduct, or her own understanding, by what she mentioned about the unhappy affair, which she communicated indeed in so incoherent and perplexed

perplexed a style that I could make out nothing to be depended upon. I then returned to Beaumont's, and found that he was given over by the surgeons who attended him. I shall not, therefore, my letter till to-morrow.

In Continuation.

Just returned from Richmond. Mrs. Lawfon has recovered the use of her reason, and with it some degree of her health. There remains however, I am told, such a weakness, and the uneasiness of her mind is so acute, that her physicians are very doubtful about her.

As I was informed that she was better, at the door, I desired to be permitted to send a message to her from Miss Camden.

I was immediately intreated to walk into the parlour.

An old gentleman, whose name is Grindall, received me with great civility, and said that he was glad to hear Miss Camden was kind enough to enquire after her afflicted friend, who had been, he hoped, and indeed believed, more unfortunate than criminal. "Let her unhappy story, therefore, continued he, be a warning to her sex upon similar occasions. Let them consider that indiscretion is very often as fatal as vice itself, as it so frequently has the appearance of it. Besides, it is of the most dangerous tendency, and frequently leads people to the commission of faults of which they thought they never could have been guilty."

He

He then sent up my message.

Mrs. Lawson returned her sincere thanks for her dear friend's enquiry after her, which was the greatest relief she had yet met with, adding, that she hoped she should be able to send her a vindication of her conduct, before she took leave of her for ever.

This is but a melancholy account of your unhappy friend, you will say, and yet it is the best I can transmit to you.

Lady Ann is, I am informed, almost frantic, and vows revenge if Beaumont dies ; though she, at the same time, confesses that she acquainted Lawson, by letter, of his visiting Mrs. Lawson,

K 6

and

and therefore, in a manner, armed him against her husband.

What fatal effects do these unwarrantable indulgencies among married people produce ! never were they more frequent.

I should not have made this observation to *you*, Madam, were I not very well assured, that whenever you change your condition, you will not be one of the offending number. I am firmly persuaded that you will never marry a man whom you do not love; and that when you have blessed him with your affection, you will not deprive him of it by the capriciousness of your disposition.

What happy prospects has *he* who has hopes of gaining so valuable a heart !
and

and who has your permission to subscribe himself,

your most obedient,
and devoted,
humble servant,
C. FOLEY.

P. S. Before I could send this to the post-house, my servant returned from having made enquires after poor Beaumont. He brings me word, that he died half an hour ago, never having had a single interval of reason. My heart is so full, that I cannot enlarge upon so distressing a subject. Miss Camden is, I hope, sufficiently acquainted with my heart, to be sensible of what I feel on the death of my unfortunate friend ; removed from this world, quite unprepared, I fear, for another.

LET-

LETTER LXX.

Mrs. LAWSON to Miss CAMDEN.

IT is once more permitted me, my dear Cecilia, to write to you; my kind, considerate friend! it will also be the last time, and I hope, therefore, that you will believe me incapable of a falsehood.

Let me begin by assuring you, in the most solemn manner, that though appearances are strongly against me, I have never been guilty of the crime laid to my charge. I have committed, indeed, numberless errors, for which I, no doubt, deserve the chastisement I have received.

It


It was my misfortune, not my fault, Cecilia, to be thrown into the way of a most agreeable man, though unhappily for him, not so strictly moral as he ought to have been. He had a thousand attracting qualities; he had, also, a great deal of pride, and was ambitious of keeping up his rank in life, even at the expence of his domestic tranquillity. With such a disposition, it was not likely that he should ever think of marrying unequally in point of birth and fortune: yet, flattered by the notice which he took of me, and believing that what I wished would certainly happen, I gave way to the pleasing delusion, till I could not support the disappointment with any tolerable degree of fortitude. I could not bear to appear little in the eyes of Beaumont, and, therefore, could
bear

208 *The* INDISCREET CONNECTION.

bear any degradation of myself. Fool that I was ! I could not be more lowered than by thinking in this manner.

I sighed, and believed I should have been happy if I had been born a dutchess, but I was soon humbled to the dust, for the absurdity of my wishes. I soon found that Beaumont had no design to marry me—I had, however, an ardent affection for him ; an affection which destroyed my reputation and my peace, and brought me to the brink of the grave. I had too much virtue to yield upon dishonourable terms, he, therefore, left me to satisfy his ambition by marrying a woman of rank and fortune, indeed, but a woman whom he could not love.

Weak and culpable as I was, I then suffered myself to be persuaded by my
mother,



mother, to marry a man whom I could not love. I wished, indeed, to live in ease and affluence, and that wish made me the more ready to give my hand to Lawfon.

My husband, though I will do him justice, by saying, that he was kind and good, was my aversion. I hated his way of living, his acquaintance, and every thing belonging to him: yet, wretched as I found myself, I strove, believing it my duty, to suppress sensations, which I, with sorrow, felt.

An unexpected interview with Beaumont, and the discovery of his being still pleased with me, revived a tenderness which had been only smothered, never totally extinguished.

Still,

Still, however, I had resolution enough, strengthened by your admonitions, my Cecilia, to resist his most importunate solicitations, and even to refuse seeing him only as a friend.

This resolution, it seems, hurt him exceedingly, and made him determine to try to bring me to change my sentiments, by appearing to be very deeply affected by them.

The conflict which I suffered was, I confess, severe; but I flattered myself that I should get the better of the weakness of my heart, though my painful struggles disordered me exceedingly.

As I was really disordered, I seized that opportunity to sleep by myself: but I will affirm, that I had not the slight-

slightest suspicions of Mr. Beaumont's intentions. When I saw him at my bedside, I shrieked, so excessive was my surprize, believing him to be a house-breaker. I should certainly have screamed as much had I immediately known him, in my room at that time of night, and when I was in bed.

He begged me, with the greatest earnestness, to be calm, as I should ruin him by making a noise.

I asked him, in a fright, how he came there ?

“ I bribed the maid, replied he, to let me in, when the family were in bed. I made an attempt a few nights ago, but a little noise alarmed the other servants ; I was, therefore, glad to
get

get off, being mistaken for a house-breaker."

He then stooped down to renew his intreaties.

At that moment the door of my room burst open, and Mr. Lawson appeared before us with a pistol in his hand.

Shame, fear, and horror, seized me at once. I should have shrunk back immediately to hide myself, for ever, if possible, from Mr. Lawson, who believed me, no doubt, guilty of the worst of crimes, had I not, seeing them ready to murder each other before my face, been hurried by a sudden impulse, to endeavour to save them.

Throw-

Throwing myself out of bed, I fell on my knees before my husband, but more dead than alive.

Regardless of *me*, however, whom he looked upon, I supposed, as an abandoned wretch, he fired his pistol.

I knew nothing farther till I found myself in Sally's arms.

The first object that struck my eyes was Beaumont bleeding on the floor.

I cannot describe what I felt : you may, indeed, conceive my sensations, my dear Cecilia, with regard to the poor, unhappy object before me ; yet—yet—Heaven knows with what difficulty I strive to suppress every improper emotion ! I only begged to
be

be carried out of *that* room, and asked Sally where Mr. Lawfon was ?

She replied, that he went away as soon as Mr. Beaumont was killed.

“ He is dead, then,” cried I, feeling my face, alternately, chilled with terror, and glowing with shame. I felt myself all over ill. I soon afterwards found that though entirely free from the crime of which I was strongly suspected, I had, by the agitation of my mind, been accessory to the destruction of an unborn innocent—Good G—d, my Cecilia ! how is one indiscretion productive of another ! how very careful ought one to be not to deviate from the straight line marked out to us by prudence ! Yet I can call heaven to witness that I never encouraged Mr. Beaumont’s
visits

visits after I was married. That I always loved him is but too true : I cannot, I will not attempt to deny it at this awful moment, when the utmost sincerity of heart will be required of me. I will confess that my streaming eyes, and heart-breaking sighs, now, even now, when my life is almost at an end, prevent my dissembling what I feel for a poor unhappy sufferer who lost his life on my account. Were I to deny this I could not hope for that mercy which I perpetually implore, and which is promised to those who are truly penitent. That I am a sincere penitent, the great searcher of all hearts well knows ; and though I shall be condemned by a mis-judging world, I still assert, with my dying breath, that I never wronged Mr. Lawson. I owe him this solemn confession for his tenderness

derness to me before the fatal moment which destroyed us all. Miserable as I am rendered by the stings of recollection, I must also confess that appearances were against me, and that as I never felt the affection for Mr. Lawson which every woman ought to feel for the man whom she marries, no person on earth, no advantages whatever should have prevailed on me to marry him. I am, therefore, deservedly punished. I submit to my fate without murmuring. I even expect my dissolution with impatience; praying the Almighty Father of all mercy, to put an end to my sufferings with my life; and praising him, most devoutly, for having enabled me, in the midst of all my surrounding horrors, to preserve myself from the most ignominious epithet which can be given to a woman. Had not Mr. Lawson,

at

at that instant interposed, heaven knows if I should have been able to resist the solicitations of a man so long, so tenderly beloved by me ; a man, for whom my affection was so deeply rooted before I believed it to be in the least degree criminal in me to prefer him to all his sex. Since, then, we were both to pay for our weaknesses, by the forfeiture of our lives, 'tis better, a million of times better that we die guiltless—May our deaths atone for all our failings ! I have only to pray that Mr. Lawson may escape the hand of justice, as I really believe that he could not possibly, in his particular situation, act otherwise than he did. My hand and my head are both weary, my Cecilia ; yet I could not quit the world without pouring out my heart, for the last time, to my best of friends, who most kindly warned me of my danger.

VOL. II.

L

I have

I have written this at different times,
when I could hold my pen. I now lay
it down for ever, thanking you, with
the utmost sincerity, for the many proofs
of your friendship bestowed on

your truly affectionate

C. LAWSON.

LETTER LXXI.

MR. GRINDALL to MR. LAWSON.

Dear Lawson,

IN my last, * the shortness of which
was occasioned by the extreme pain
in my hand, I could only prepare you
for what you were to expect, and I hope,

* This letter is omitted, because the editor
thought the publication of it unnecessary.

my

my preparation has enabled you to bear the shock of what I am now, with the truest concern, going to relate.

Beaumont died two days after he was wounded, without having been once capable of talking on that or any other subject.

We endeavoured, with the greatest possible precaution, to conceal his death from Mrs. Lawson, looking upon the concealment of it to be absolutely necessary, as she was, from her miscarriage (occasioned by her fright) in a very dangerous situation ; but we could not keep her in ignorance, she inquired in so particular a manner, and with so much earnestness about him, declaring that whether he recovered or not, she should soon be no more ; that our attempts

to deceive her were to no purpose. She declared, also, to the last moment of her life, that nothing criminal ever passed between her and Beaumont—"My speaking to him, continued she, twice when he came into the house, without my knowledge, cannot, I hope, be called criminal ; and as to the last fatal interview, I was entirely ignorant of his intentions—I was inexpressibly shocked at the sight of him, and the sudden exclamation which I involuntarily made, alarming Mr. Lawson brought him into the room. I have, therefore, been the innocent cause of Mr. Beaumont's death, and of Mr. Lawson's banishment from his family, friends and native country. Is such an unfortunate wretch, Sir, fit to live ? No, certainly ! yet I am only unfortunate, and not guilty of any crime. Had I never been educated with
Lady

Lady Charlotte, I should never have known her too-amiable brother! I ought not, indeed, you will say, to have encouraged a passion which could not, I was sensible, be gratified. It is too true; there I was culpable; but I was young, possessed of an uncommon degree of sensibility, bred up among girls of the same age and taste, and early taught that to be *great* was to be happy. By my education, I was excited to indulge the most ambitious views, to endeavour to make my fortune, and to increase my consequence by aiming at a connection above my station, and for that reason exceedingly dangerous. I will not tell you to what I might not have been tempted to submit, to secure, as I hoped, the man I loved, had not you kindly interposed the day I was going to meet him in the *Green Park*, and

saved me from destruction. My grateful thanks are, therefore, due, Sir, to you, for my preservation from ruin— You could not preserve me from wretchedness, but you snatched me from infamy. Continue, Sir, to exert your kindness in my favour, even after my death, by vindicating me to Mr. Lawson, to whom it will be needless for *me* to write, as he, believing me capable of deceiving him so grossly will, consequently, be deaf to all that I can say in my defence. Relate to him, Sir, the sincere confession of a dying woman, who would tremble at the thought of the vengeance of heaven should she dare to utter a falsehood in her last moments. Tell him, that in spite of the injury I have occasioned him, I wish he may forget me and be happy.”

She

She could add no more, and indeed, all that she *had* said was delivered with many interruptions, with great difficulty of breathing.

And now, my dear Lawson, I am very much afraid that what I have related may affect you too much, loving her so truly as you did. But I think it my duty to do her all possible justice; she really deserves every thing that can be justly said in her behalf, as she would have been, undoubtedly, one of the most amiable girls in the world, the best of daughters, the tenderest, the most virtuous of wives, had she not been spoilt by a wrong education. Had she been educated at home, by a sensible discreet mother, she might have proved a blessing to her husband, a useful member to society. There are pleasures

suitable to all stations, rational, and agreeable to every rank in life; and had Kitty Lester never kept company with people in an exalted sphere; if she had not been told that she must necessarily be more happy with a man of quality, than with a man in trade, or than even with an honest, affectionate mechanic, she might, at this moment, have been blest in her husband's love, and delighted with the prospect of a growing family, who would, like their worthy parents, have been early taught that happiness is the sure reward of virtuous industry, and that nobody ought to look for felicity in exalted stations *only*, since there are few, comparatively very few persons in high life, who enjoy it: on the other hand, how frequently do we see the middling, and even the lowest classes

classes of people, with the common necessaries of life, chearful and contented ! May these reflections, my dear Lawson, reconcile you to your present exile ! Consider, that you did not murder, premeditatedly, the bold invader of your house ; and let that consideration console you, in some measure, for the fatal consequences, with which your hasty proceeding was attended ; and for the future, never raise your hand even against your enemy. The foolish, mercenary girl who was bribed to let a man into her master's house, into her mistress's chamber, ought to be most severely punished : but we want laws for the punishment of such crimes, which, however trivial they may seem, often give birth to the most melancholy scenes..

As

As to Mrs. Lester, she is happy in not being, at present, sensible of the calamities which her vanity and ambition (for they must be attributed to *them*) has occasioned. It may be urged, indeed, in her defence, that she has been more weak than wicked. How unhappy is the girl, who is left to the care of a vain, foolish mother!

I hope, my dear Lawson, that you will, by summoning your reason, your religion, to your aid, reflect upon this melancholy event in a proper manner. Let me hear frequently from you, and believe me to be ever,

with the greatest sincerity,

your affectionate friend,

and humble servant,

E. GRINDALL.

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